

Lateral III

Lateral is back. A pleasure to return, and a return on pleasure. We hope. We began with many promises. To craft a publishing currency that would be timeful, attendant to the spaces that thought might occupy, bearing a value as to how knowledge in all its materiality might accrue against the dulling algorithms of excellence sorted by rank. A lot to ask for, and there is much uncertainty between making a mark and leaving a marker. Our aim continues to be to expand these spaces in between, to open laterally the affinities and affiliations by which cultural studies moves and makes a difference in its worlds. Cultural studies, without doubt, has been long on promise, and with promise comes the prospect of disappointment. But this history is also the engagement with the evaluative criteria by which we would know we were getting more of what we wanted, and therefore a pursuit of the efficacies of combating various regimes of measure. Our promise has been as much to re-figure the means by which publication opens a social imaginary, a making public that makes publics, but of energizing the ways in which those with a commitment to cultural studies in all its guises might associate. Lateral is far from being an organ, a pound of flesh or a back bone of the Cultural Studies Association, but it remains an opening through which those various circulations might flow. How we might achieve this is a question we hope to engage in the entangled seriality of this second issue with this eleventh gathering of our association—and with what comes next. Please join us.

Lateral II is also, like the first, a braiding of research threads. This time we offer a triple helix. The Cultural Industries thread, curated by Jaafar Aksikas, presents a conversation between two nodes of cultural studies that move in and outside the academy Ien Ang's Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney, and the Cultural Studies Praxis Collective at the University of Washington. This intersectoral work hints at an alter-economy, what it terms a negotiation with partners for critical purchase that complicates the reductive rubrics of neoliberal exchange. The Theory Thread, curated by Patricia Clough features a dossier on digital feminism assembled by Katherine Behar. This too is an effort to find value beyond measure, but also to refuse the algorithms of success, to assert the ungoogleable, the necessary failure, in pursuit of an anti-search engine that might power other reservoirs of thought. The Universities in Question Thread, is curated by student activists Megan Turner and Niall Twohig, and art from the smARTaction collective curated by Tina Orlandini. This dossier of manifestos and art works from various university

mobilizations and occupations from Quebec, Cairo, Occupy Wall Street, University of California, and University of Puerto Rico, document the creativity that lies within critical mobilizations and the contagious proliferation of forms that this emergent politics takes.

All of this work is set to work in a design build especially for this issue by Jamie Skye Bianco and Zac DavidM. This build out of the design of the issue inverts what has become the standard proprietary formula for the proliferation of publications amidst the crisis of publishing. The promise to expand to fit remains very much on our horizon.

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Ecologies - Trash, Toxicity, Transmission

Thread editor: Jamie Skye Bianco

[Nicole Starosielski - *Circuits to Past* \(/issue3/ecologies/starosielski\)](/issue3/ecologies/starosielski)

[Katherine Behar - *E-Waste* \(/issue3/ecologies/behar\)](/issue3/ecologies/behar)

[Stephanie Boluk - *Money as Medium, Speculation and Scrypt* \(/issue3/ecologies/boluk\)](/issue3/ecologies/boluk)

[Jarah Moesch - *L.U.N.G.S* \(/issue3/ecologies/moesch\)](/issue3/ecologies/moesch)

[Jocelyn Monahan and Jeff Curran - *Topographies of Interference* \(/issue3/ecologies/monahan-curran\)](/issue3/ecologies/monahan-curran)

[Lynn Sullivan - *Long Time No Ocean* \(/issue3/ecologies/sullivan\)](/issue3/ecologies/sullivan)

[Melissa Rogers - *Make\(r\) Space, Making Space: A Media Ecology in Two Parts* \(/issue3/ecologies/rogers\)](/issue3/ecologies/rogers)

Introduction

Let me begin with a thank you to the contributors of the Ecologies thread and to Rob Gehl for his collaboration and generosity.

Ecologies is a new thread for Lateral and an experiment in practice-based, multi-modal and multi-venue presentation of work in cultural studies. As the Design Editor for Lateral since its inception, I have worked with many contributors and thread editors to produce conversations in web-based publishing that emerge from the membership and annual conference of the Cultural Studies Association, and while these works (all of which can be found right here on Lateral) trace back to our annual gathering, these publications essentially function outside of the conference itself.

Until now.

The Ecologies thread and the works you find here constitute one of three parts of the Ecologies project, produced in conjunction with the Media Interventions Working Group and the inaugural CSA makerSpace!

Contributors present their work at the conference in the Media Interventions panels in the modes we might expect to find at a scholarly conference. Two panels of speakers, all of the folk listed here, will discuss or show their work to the attendees of the Cultural Studies

Annual Conference.

In addition, and with the incredible co-organizing talents and labor of Melissa Rogers, CSA's first makerSpace and exhibition runs concurrently with the Conference. The scholar/artists presented here as well as additional CSA scholar/artist/practitioners will present works for exhibition, workshops and performances.

The makerSpace is documented in Melissa Roger's contribution here in the thread (after July 2014).

So please, enjoy what you find in the Ecologies thread, but please also return, as these ecologies and collaborations are growing.

Jamie Skye Bianco

Circuits to the Past

Nicole Starosielski

[View Circuits to the Past \(/issue3/ecologies/starosielski/circuits-to-the-past\)](/issue3/ecologies/starosielski/circuits-to-the-past)

This series of photographs tracks digital signals across nine nodes of our fiber-optic undersea cable network – a system responsible for carrying 99% of all transoceanic internet traffic. The images document cable landings in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Tahiti, sites where submarine systems come aground and become entangled in the existing movements of both humans and nonhumans. Rather than locating us in an urban landscape, “Signal Tracks” hones in on the cable system’s rural and aquatic environments, extending from breaking waves over Sydney’s beaches, to mountains where brush fires scour O’ahu’s west shore, to the habitats of endangered mountain beavers in northern California. Although on the surface these images appear absent of industrial infrastructure, the accompanying textual annotations highlight how such “natural” ecologies have been folded into contemporary digital systems.

Circuits to the Past

Nicole Starosielski

This photo essay charts the remnants of undersea telegraph stations in the Pacific with the aim of opening a similar conduit between networks past and present. Though we often imagine contemporary media and communication as moving wirelessly beyond territorial limits, almost all transoceanic internet traffic currently runs along more than half a million miles of undersea fiber-optic cable. Following a general pattern of infrastructural growth described by Graham and Marvin, these cables have rarely developed in isolation and are often grounded in existing transportation and resource systems (2001). Internet cables tend to follow the paths of analogue telephone cables from the 1950s, which were in turn layered over telegraph systems from the previous century. Telegraph lines trace the vectors of other historical movements, including mobilizations of bodies, goods, and ships via colonial networks. Between layers of infrastructure development, the cable station has often served as an invisible gateway for exchange, a place where the spatiality of one kind of network is tied into another.

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Nicole Starosielski



Figure 1. A watchtower looks over Botany Bay at the site of the La Perouse cable station, a point of Australia's connection to New Zealand from 1876 to 1917.

As a result, cable stations play a role in stabilizing networks over time. In Australia, cables were brought ashore at Botany Bay, the site where Captain Cook first staked the British Flag in 1770 and where French explorer La Perouse landed in 1788. Although it was ten kilometers south of Sydney, Botany Bay was selected as a site for a cable station in part due to this proximity to nautical traffic and ship landings, which in turn helped to attract military and defense installations. Even after the telegraph station closed for signal traffic, the building continued to serve surrounding publics - emergent circulations continued to leverage the resources of existing nodes. It was used briefly as quarters for Coast Hospital nurses and subsequently as a women's refuge operated by the Salvation Army. Traffic was eventually redirected to central Sydney, landing at Bondi Beach, where internet signals continue to enter Australia today. The builders of at least one subsequent cable system, however, still toyed with the idea of returning to La Perouse. The old cable station building (now a museum housing the artifacts of transnational communication), a nearby watchtower originally meant to look out for smugglers, and a monument named for the early French explorer all serve as reminders of the location's significance in drawing in heterogeneous historical currents.

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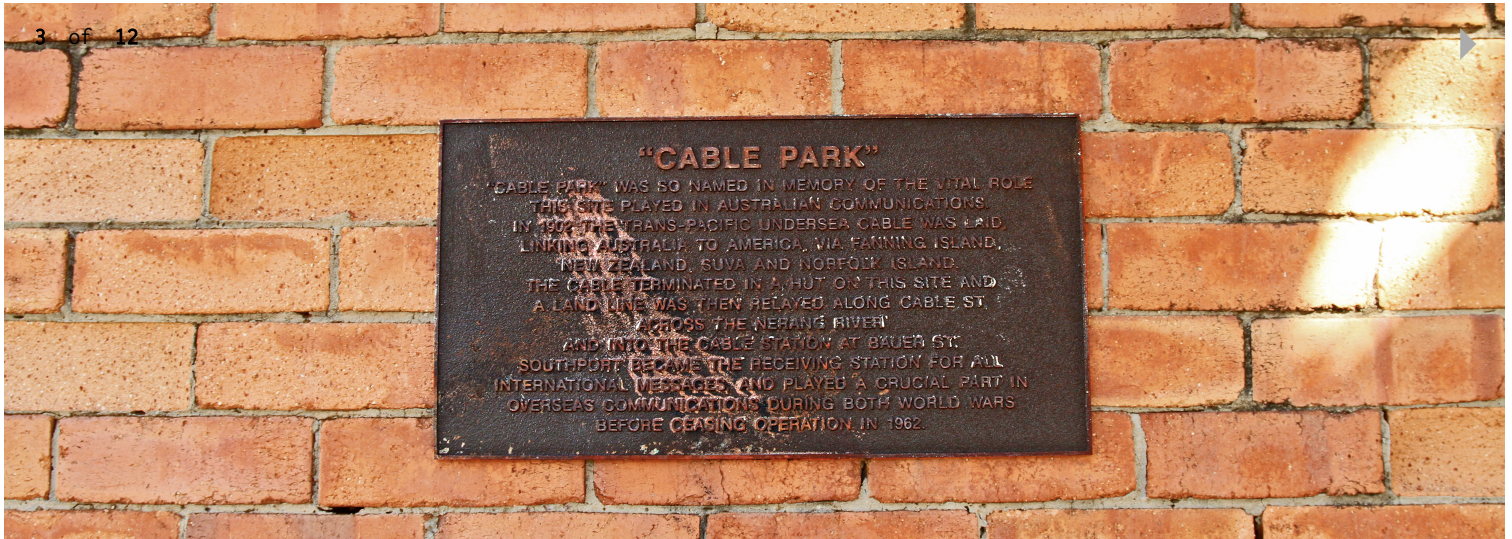


Figure 2. A plaque graces the side of the old cable hut at Southport, Australia, where the Pacific Cable Board's systems operated between 1902 and 1964.

The cable station is a location where network history materializes and becomes visible, aural, perceptible. It is the architecture in which history is celebrated and displayed, where generations of communications workers construct a sense of shared tradition, and where major network transitions are experienced. Our treatment of the early cable stations evidences, in part, a cultural relationship to communications past. In Southport, Australia, it is hard to miss where the cable landed, even though the station is no longer there, since a park, a street, and an apartment building have been named after it. The cable hut still stands, and is marked in the Queensland Heritage Register as an important site of cultural history. When the station's owners sought to tear down the buildings to build a retirement home, residents spearheaded a campaign to transform them into the music complex of the local Southport School. In "Cable Park," a monument commemorates the Pacific Cable Board telegraph system. A large map, engraved in metal, delineates its colonial routes, extending outward from Southport, connecting to Norfolk Island, branching off to New Zealand and to Fiji, from which it snakes northward to Fanning Island and eventually Bamfield, Canada. A quote from Shakespeare, "I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes," anchors the system in British history.

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Figure 3. The telegraph rooms at the Bamfield cable station, which operated from 1902-1959, have since been turned into science labs.

The first set of British and American colonial stations in the Pacific were typically located in remote environments. Cablemen were a critical part of the circuit and spent long days transmitting and re-transmitting signals. The large and often out-of-place complexes built to house them were later valued as support architectures for local and regional projects. As in Southport, the cable station at Bamfield, Canada was evacuated after telephones replaced telegraphs. The multi-story building, designed by a leading architect in Victoria, had close to fifty rooms, including telegraph offices, accommodations, a billiard room, a music room, and a library with books about the British empire (Scott 1994). In 1972, the cable station buildings were converted to house the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre. As at La Perouse, references to the history of the area remain part of the landscape. A monument to the original cables stands at the facility's center. Cable memorabilia remains inside the building. Marine scientists have made use of cable facilities not only at Bamfield, but also across the Pacific. Scientists seeking new species near Wellington, New Zealand briefly utilized the cable house at Titahi Bay and the University of Honolulu leased the Fanning Island station for its oceanographic experiments.

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Figure 4. Part of the cable complex at Doubtless Bay, New Zealand was floated on a barge up a river to its landing spot at Oruru, where it now serves as a local community center and a cinema.

At the Far North Regional Archives, I sit at a table with residents eager to share the history of the Northland, New Zealand and their encounters at the original telegraph house, now a local cinema theater. Each recounts a movie that they had seen at the “Swamp Palace” and the extensive stories about the films that would be told by its outgoing exhibitionist. The history of the Northland station, which operated for only a decade between 1902 and 1912, isn’t limited to the archives. Images are mounted on the walls at the local “Cable Bay” general store. The landing is commemorated with a stone monument, coordinates emblazoned on its surface. These stories and the visual culture of cable history resonate across the Pacific. In another “Cable Bay” in New Zealand, on the country’s South Island, a local couple has set up Cable Bay Holiday Park, dedicating a room to images of the bay’s history – an amateur archive. The original telegraph building in Fiji has been restored to house FINTEL, Fiji’s international communications company. Even after they ceased to be hubs of communications activity, stations along the original British line have housed other social

circulations - of science, of cinema, of culture. The buildings, and the histories they preserve, allude to the colonial past yet simultaneously are woven into the fabric of local networks, serving specific community needs.

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Figure 5. Remnants of old telephone cables lay across the beach at Vatuwaqa, Fiji. The original telegraph building has been renovated and now houses Fiji's international telecommunications company.

Along the line of the Commercial Pacific Cable Company, which connected United States territories in San Francisco, Hawai'i, Midway Island, Guam, and the Philippines, history appears differently. The original cable station at Sumay, Guam operated for almost fifty years, from 1902-1951, supporting a secure line of communication between east and west. As it kept the island central in transpacific networking, this station also laid the groundwork for the development of Guam's three fiber-optic stations, through which internet traffic between the United States and Asia continues to transit. Given this past, one might expect that the structure would be preserved or at the very least, well marked. Many other sites attacked during the war have been memorialized across Guam. In contrast, at Darwin, Australia, part of the cable station decimated during World War II has been literally embedded in the government building that replaced it. When I visit Sumay, however, all that I find is a single sign noting the former station's presence. A maze of concrete structures, once the sprawling cable complex, has been overtaken by the jungle. Only recently, over half a century after the attack, has a team begun to excavate ruins in the area.

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Figure 6. The ruins at Sumay, Guam remain on the Naval Base and are inaccessible to the public without a pass and an escort.

The other stations along the American transpacific telegraph line also remain unknown, unexcavated, and insignificant in their surrounding landscapes. At Ocean Beach in San Francisco numerous pictures were taken to document the original landing, but nothing remains of the cable's infrastructure today. The original cable hut has been demolished and an apartment building has been put up in its place. Like Ocean Beach, Hawai'i's Sans Souci Beach is a major tourist attraction in downtown Waikiki. No street signs, monuments, or parks mark its former landing. The only mention of the cable is a brief note at the bottom of the menu of a local restaurant. The ruins at Midway Island cannot be accessed since there are no regular commercial flights to the atoll. Only military groups, research teams, and eco-expeditions that charter flights may visit. Much of Manila's coastal shoreline has been built out into the bay. The telegraph landing point here is likely submerged beneath roads and shopping malls. Transpacific communication histories live on solely in the historical images of cable landings and commemoration ceremonies, scattered few and far between, and often buried in remote archives.

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Figure 7. At the telegraph landing in San Francisco apartment buildings now stand at the location of the original cable hut.

Several of the American sites are still critical locations for signal exchange. Guam and Hawai'i remain major hubs for transpacific internet traffic. In contrast, many of the early sites along the first British Pacific routes are not close to contemporary cable landings. Just as the cables moved north from La Perouse to Sydney, and later to Sydney's northern suburbs, cables have been dislocated from Nelson, Northland, Darwin, Bamfield, Norfolk Island and Fanning Island. Canada's traffic is now routed south through United States cables. New Zealand's internet leaves the country through Takapuna, north of Auckland, and Muriwai, on its west coast, rather than two original cable landings. The visibility of cable history along the British colonial route - from the museum at La Perouse to the reconstructed walls at Darwin - is accompanied by a shift away from these locations as significant telecommunications hubs. In contrast, the solidification of American telecommunications networks at nodes such as Hawai'i and Guam is accompanied by a lack of institutional interest in the maintenance of early cable sites.

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Figure 8. At Hawai‘i’s Sans Souci Beach (left), the only remnant of the original transpacific cable landing is a mention at the bottom of a restaurant menu. The poles that mark contemporary communications cables (right) blend into the dry landscape of O‘ahu’s west shore.

There are a number of practical reasons for this divergence, including the increased infrastructural awareness at typically remote British stations, the urban buildup around American stations at San Francisco and Honolulu, and the differing cultural relationships to a colonial past in the United States and in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Regardless, our forgetting of cable stations, especially in places that remain network hubs, serves to keep contemporary network infrastructure invisible. It is difficult to think of cable systems when they are spatially or temporally proximate. The nodes of the networks we are hooked into remain the most difficult to grasp. At stake in the forgetting of these systems is our understanding of the historical development of interconnections between places, the ongoing cost of maintenance, and the embodied difficulties of continued operation. Although cablemen are today relegated to oversight of the network, rather than the physical retransmission of messages, cable stations continue to be sites for the active monitoring and maintenance of transoceanic communications. How might we re-cast the global networks of media distribution –

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Figure 9. The cable landing at Nelson, New Zealand has been re-purposed as a campground. Inside Cable Bay Holiday Park's reception area, an amateur archive of collected historical material documents the system's impact.

At the climax of "White Noise," as the engineers are listening to Moses cross the Red Sea, one of the pair suggests that they should tape and analyze the sounds emanating from the depths. The second engineer resists, arguing that if they continue to listen in and happen to overhear the voice of God, this knowledge would destroy them. "We musn't hear it," he exclaims, "We would know for sure. It would make a worthless thing of faith" (Kilworth 514). He pulls the plug, cuts the circuit, and fires a gun at the system. Destroying the cable station, he attempts to preserve a continued faith in the world's mysteries and a belief in the possibility of earthly transcendence. This short story conveys at least one reality about today's cable stations: they register traces of the past that are difficult to reconcile with the transcendence networks promise to us. As Anna McCarthy and Nick Couldry have argued, "the full recognition of the materiality of space, and spatial relations, does violence to certain visions, themselves perhaps quite comforting, of what media are" (2004: 3). It is only through the symbolic destruction of this material past that we can continue to believe in the immateriality of our communications networks. Counter to this imagination, the images here

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Figure 10. Bricks from the old Darwin communications complex, destroyed during World War II, are embedded into the walls of the city's government buildings.

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Nicole Starosielski is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. Her forthcoming book project, *The Undersea Network*, examines the cultural and environmental dimensions of transoceanic cable systems, beginning with the early global telegraph network and extending to the fiber-optic infrastructure that carries almost all international internet traffic.

E-Waste

Katherine Behar

[View E-Waste Gallery \(/issue3/ecologies/behar/gallery\)](/issue3/ecologies/behar/gallery)

My artwork investigates the materiality of digital culture, and the ways that our contemporary lavish lives are so dependent on the overlooked labor of lowbrow machines. *E-Waste* is a new sculptural investigation that incorporates a broad spectrum of USB-powered devices. The objects are partially encrusted with both “natural” and “man-made” environmental materials, yet these half-fossilized mutants continue to function, providing sources of light, sound, and movement.

Digital cultural mores privilege ever-escalating levels of productivity, which can only be achieved through ceaseless labor. This includes the labor of humans (whose actions are digitally captured across all realms of life) and that of machines (that need never rest). I recommend sympathy for the devices we exploit, on the grounds that we ourselves are becoming increasingly device-like, ensnared in compulsory productivity - whether we are “working” in the traditional sense for our own gain, or generating value for companies like Google and Facebook each time we conduct a web search or click “like.”

Such hyper-productivity results in gross over-accumulation. The sculptures in *E-Waste* offer a physical parallel to surpluses of big data by highlighting the counterpart surfeit in consumer media artifacts. These works also accentuate a second result of hyper-productivity: its environmental impact. While *E-Waste* suggests that cheap throwaway USB artifacts will outlive humans, these clusters and clumps confirm how affinities flow between objects and environment. In a nonhuman afterlife, the built environment extends an end to endless work, swarming and securing the bodies of orphaned devices.

Gallery

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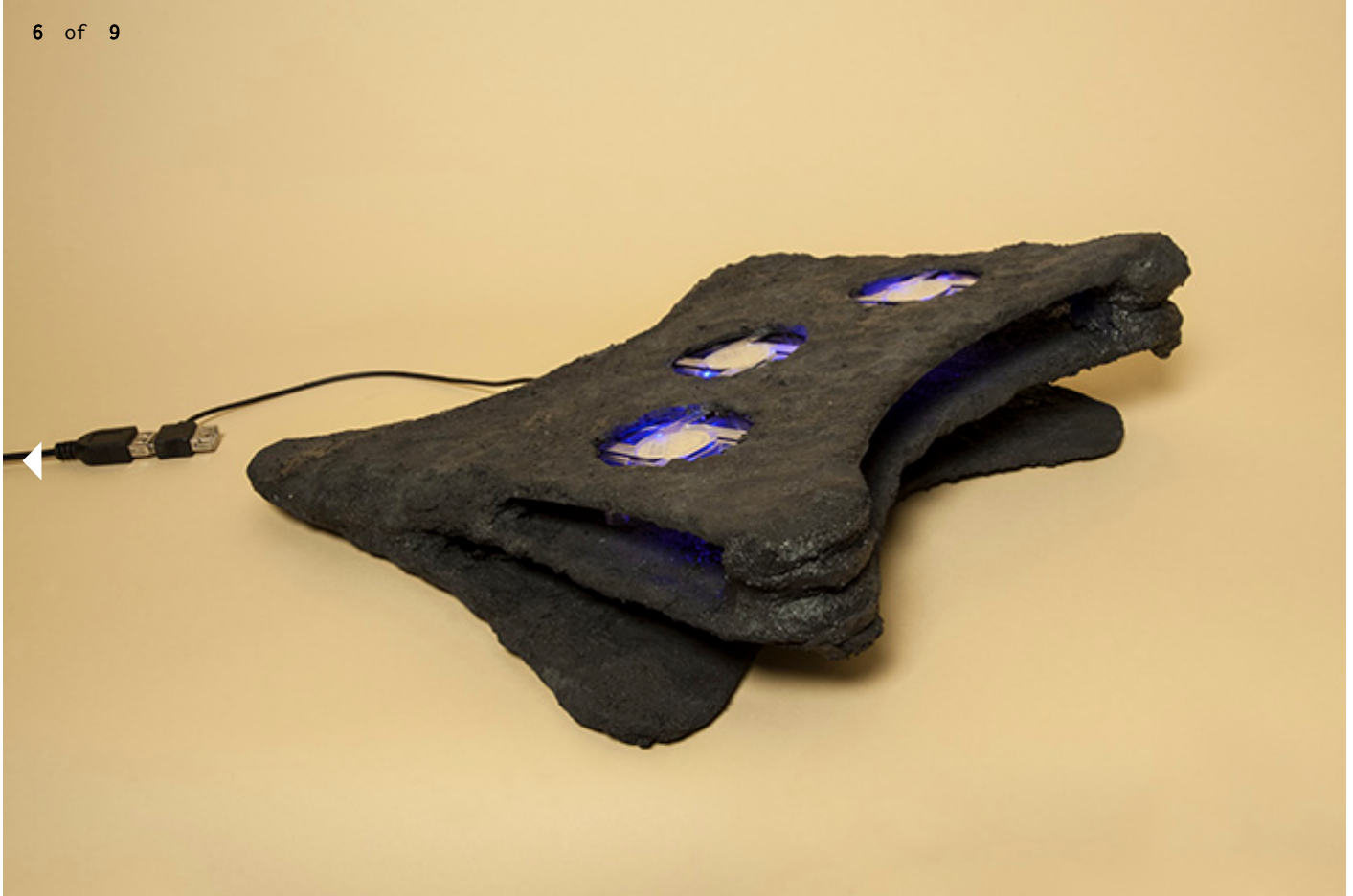
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Money as Medium, Speculation and Scrypt

Stephanie Boluk

[View Money as Medium, Speculation and Scrypt \(/issue3/ecologies/boluk/main\)](#)

Mixed Media and Social Exchange

Ian Alexander, James Anaipakos, Jonathan Beller, Stephanie Boluk, Sara Collins, Katherine Conway, Ian McKenzie, Vidisha Paul, David Steine, Michael Weiss, and Heather Zwillenberg

Scrypt is a local, alternative currency designed and distributed in Brooklyn in the spring of 2014. In the tradition of J.S. Boggs' meticulously drawn one-sided banknotes in which his wallet was also his sketchbook, scrypt takes the form of small, bronze-painted ledgers which can be exchanged for goods and services but it also serves as a medium for iterative aesthetic production. The circulation of the money served not to depreciate or debase, but appreciate its value by producing, as the manifesto printed on the currency declares, "a living archive of collective labor" in the form of drawings, detritus, poems, dirt, cross-stitch, and even other currency. In an attempt to reconcile the discrepancies between the art-object, commodity-object, and money-object, scrypt engages the contradictions between the materiality and abstraction of the money form--a currency lacking both fixed denominations and pre-determined values. Ordinarily there must be a universal equivalency of value of the money-form in relation to itself. An individual dollar must be equal to all others. Scrypt experiments with social and economic exchanges in order to refuse this model of a general equivalent.

Money as Medium, Speculation and Scrypt

Stephanie Boluk

Money as Medium, *Speculation* and Scrypt

“Money and language have something in common,” Franco Berardi writes in *The Uprising* (2012), “they are nothing and they move everything.” For Berardi, the virtualization of reality and rise of finance capital in which money is unmoored from any material commodity operate as the dystopian mirror of language and poetry’s semiotic play. Writing from a different perspective, Andrew Fraser notes the deep complicity of art with financialization and social division by examining how “art prices do not go up as a society as a whole becomes wealthier, but only when income inequality increases” (197). From poetry and art to the 1% and the 2008 global economic collapse, this essay investigates the coevolution of aesthetics and finance in digital culture through an analysis of two classroom experiments in which money, “the vanishing mediator,” is explored as a medium for not only financial exchange, but artistic and poetic practice.

In 2012 and 2013 I taught two classes in which students collaborated on projects that both focused on the operations of money. The first took place at Vassar College in which the class joined many others to become players of *Speculation*, an alternate reality game (ARG) directed by Katherine Hayles, Patrick Jagoda, and Patrick LeMieux. Set in a near-future after the collapse of the Eurozone and creation of a global oligarchy, *Speculation’s* diffuse, transmedial form of storytelling engages the conditions of capitalism by deploying the inscrutable and inaccessible processes of algorithmic stock trading, complex derivatives, and futures investment as a form of electronic literature. The production of fiction as a literary genre and the production of what Marx called “fictitious capital” are entwined in *Speculation*. The alternate reality game pairs concepts like Guy Debord’s *dérive* with the digital logic of financial derivatives in order to produce what could be called a kind of derivative fiction or, as the game designers propose, a “derivative worlding” (Hayles et. al. 225). As much as *Speculation* is a game about finance capital, *Speculation* also *is* finance capital. Over the course of the semester the students collaborated with the designers to build a world using digital technologies, hypertext, and locative media in order to not only

express, but enact the distributed, deterritorialized, and psycho-pathological conditions of finance capitalism in an attempt to re-orient their relationship to the contemporary economic imaginary.

A year later, in the Spring of 2014, a group of students at Pratt Institute made money. They determined that the best way to understand and experiment with money as a medium was to invent their own: the result was a local, alternative currency named *script*. Rather than removing friction or masking its materiality, *script* was designed with the goal of returning friction back to the realm of abstract exchange value with the hope that this would activate the return of sociality and community. Taking the form of a small, bronze-painted ledger, the students produced and distributed *script* throughout campus and around New York City. (The word “*script*” itself is a portmanteau of scrip, script, and crypt.) In the tradition of J.S. Boggs’ meticulously drawn one-sided banknotes in which his wallet was also his sketchbook, the *script* notebooks could be exchanged for goods and services, but were also a medium for iterative aesthetic production. . The circulation of the money served not to depreciate or debase, but appreciate its value by producing, as the manifesto printed on the currency declares, “a living archive of collective labor” in the form of drawings, detritus, poems, dirt, cross-stitch, and even other currency. *Script* challenged the contradictions inherent in the **money** form between its materiality and its status as ahistorical abstraction by experimenting with a currency that lacked fixed denominations and pre-determined values. Each transaction left a social and material trace and was either incorporated into the value of the notes themselves or through a system of digital QR codes in which users voluntarily geolocated their transactions.

Although they intervened on a culture of financialization in two very different ways, both *Speculation* and *script* explore the intersection of money with the history of media, imperialism, colonialism, and computation. If capitalism is a kind of computer, a difference engine propagating vectors of exchange, these projects attempted to reprogram its operations. Apart from exploring the homology between money, language, computation, and philosophies of abstraction, *Speculation* and *script* engage in collaborative practices that interrupt forms of classroom pedagogy based around the concept of the neoliberal individual (and neoliberal university). When money is pursued not for profit, but play, and when money is transformed from a medium of exchange to a medium for artistic practice, these two moneygames make invisible hands visible.

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L.U.N.G.S

Jarah Moesch

[View the galleries \(/issue3/ecologies/moesch/galleries\)](/issue3/ecologies/moesch/galleries)

LUNGS is an activist research project investigating pollution as a cause of diseases of poverty, first by interrogating how pollution information is collected and analyzed, and then by creating low-cost, remote-deployable pollution sensor kits to enable more informed decision-making in relationship to local, real-time pollution and health.

Since outdoor air pollution is a major public health risk, the World Health Organization has pinpointed six major chemicals for which they track and collect daily averages worldwide in order to “capture representative values for human exposure” [1] to reduce their disease burden. Unfortunately, guiding public policy from *representative* data [2] means that they leave out ‘known hot spots’ [3]. Data is therefore not available for people living, traveling and working in and around these areas.

The WHO recognizes “significant inequality in the exposure to air pollution and the related health risk: air pollution combines with other aspects of the social and physical environment, creating disproportional disease burden in populations with limited incomes and with minimal local resources to take action” [4]. LUNGS kits will therefore directly monitor those ‘hotspots,’ so as to identify levels in real time in those locations.

As a collaborative research group founded on feminist models of collaboration, flattened hierarchies, co-learning and skill sharing, the LUNGS project is open-access. The code, instructions and collective database will be freely available to anyone in real-time, including concerned citizens, journalists and law-makers, enabling them to create their own kit and to make changes to their daily activities or to local policy.

[View the galleries \(/issue3/ecologies/moesch/galleries\)](/issue3/ecologies/moesch/galleries)

NOTES:

[1] <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/index.html>
(<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/index.html>)

[2]http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/databases/Methods_OAP_database_2011.pdf
(http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/databases/Methods_OAP_database_2011.pdf)

[3] In order to present air quality that is largely representative for human exposure, urban measurement characterized as urban background, urban traffic, residential areas, commercial and mixed areas were used. Stations characterized as particular "hot spots" or exclusively industrial areas were not included, unless they were contained in reported city means and could not be dissociated. This selection is in line with the aim of capturing representative values for human exposure. The location of hot spots, often measured for the purpose of capturing the cities' maximum values, and industrial areas, were deemed less likely to be representative for the mean exposure of a significant part of a city's population. "Hot spots" were either designated as such by the original reports, or were qualified as such due to their exceptional nature (e.g. exceptionally busy roads etc.). Omitting them may have lead to an underestimation of the mean air pollution levels of a city.

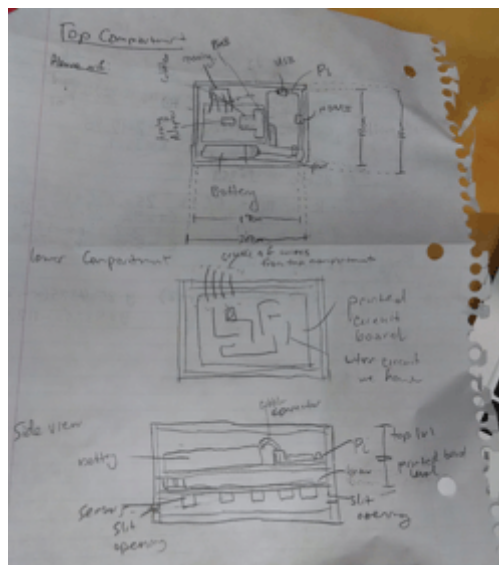
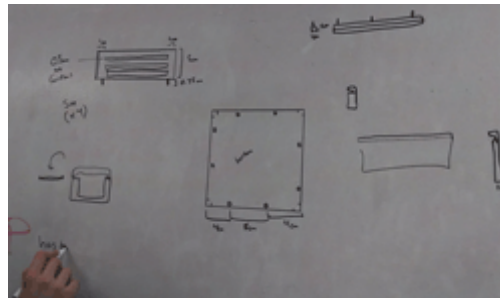
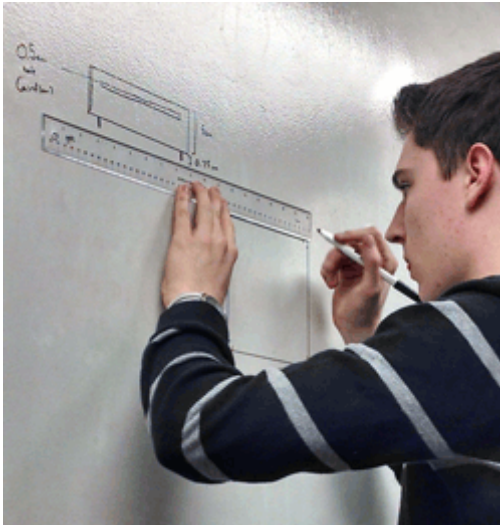
[4]http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/databases/public_health_policy/en/index1.html
(http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/databases/public_health_policy/en/index1.html)

L.U.N.G.S



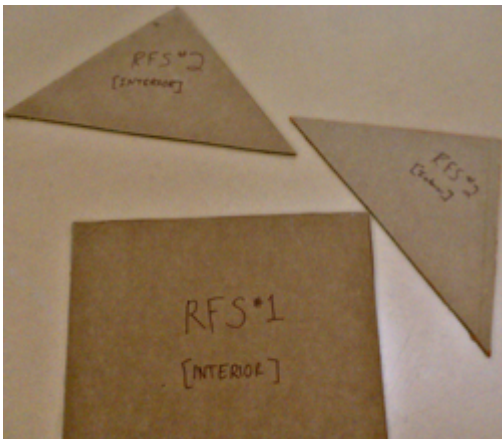
Part 1: (DESIGN)

designing the physical structure for water & wind protection



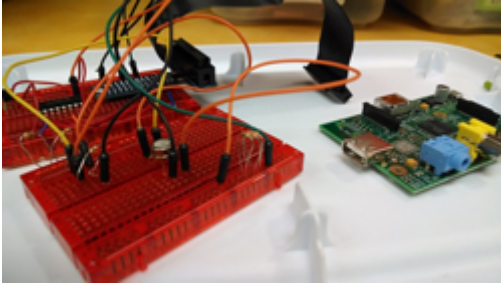
Part 2: (TEST)

first iteration of Kit case design building out of cardboard



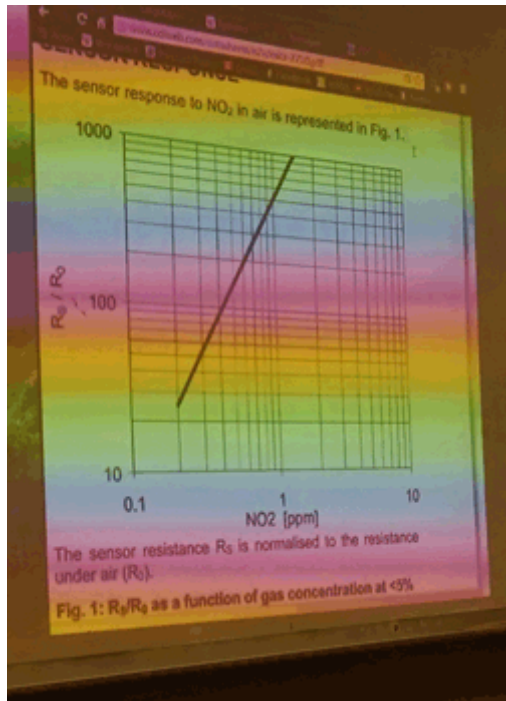
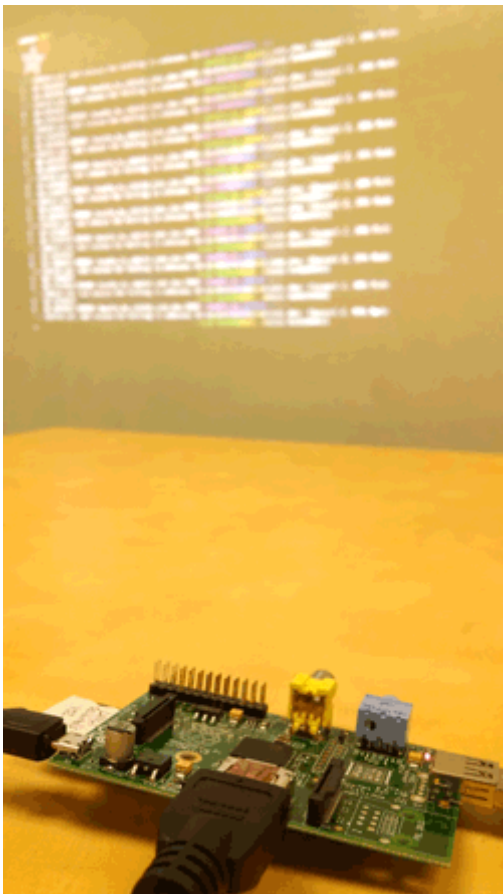
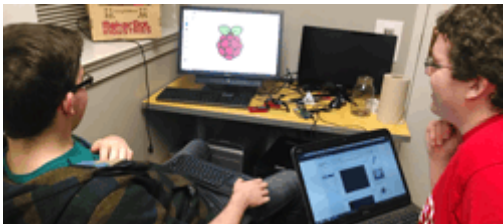
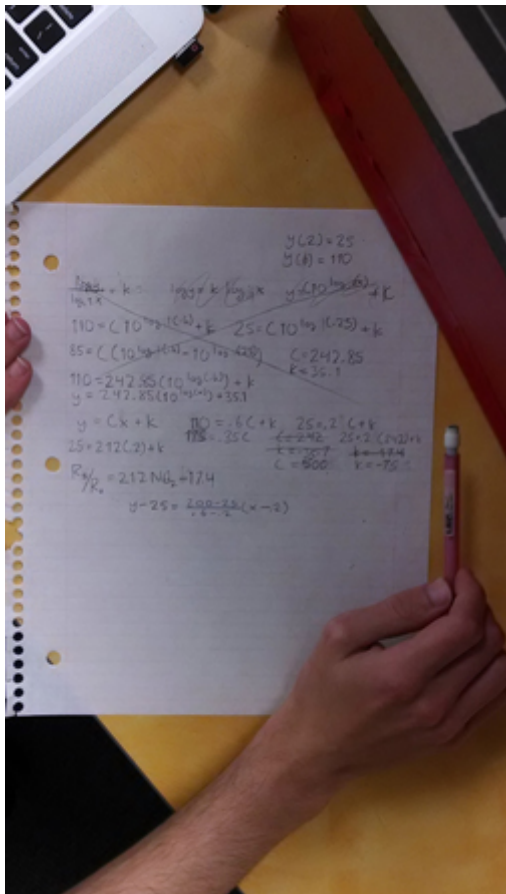
Part 2: (CIRCUITS)

building the circuits & sensor testing



Part 3: (CODE)

code design & implementation



Topographies of Interference

Jocelyn Monahan and Jeff Curran

Artist's Statement

The video footage for this project was shot within the borders of Council Bluffs, IA, from March 11-16, 2014. Since 2007, Google has opened two data centers in the city. Intrigued by the increasing trend by big tech companies in building server farms in the Midwest, we decided to go capture the transformations, slippages, and interferences between agriculture, industry, ag-industry, and the new information economy as reflected in the landscape. Throughout the video you can see farmland, trains, power plants, grain elevators, the Con-Agra logo, and Google's primary color scheme hinted at on the outside of the first data center they built in the city.

What became apparent as we documented the town's visual and aural landscapes was that the presence of industry and agriculture in the city was much more visible than that of Google. Power plants and grain elevators marked the city's skyline; railroads curved through and around the city. MidAmerican Energy, ConAgra, and other logos appeared on trains and signs. Google, in comparison, was remarkably invisible. The thin stripes of primary colors and a temporary sign printed on plastic with their logo at the first data center was the only evidence of their presence we saw in the city; at their second location, some of the construction workers weren't even sure if the building was owned by Google or not.

Once we found Google, though, the overlaps in landscape we had been looking for became easy to spot. Google's first data center in the area was across the road from an empty field, but bounded by a major road and a FedEx shipping plant. Their new location was settled in the middle of 1,000 acres of farmland they purchased at the same time as the first location, and requested the city rezone the space from agricultural to industrial land. Near both of Google's locations, a number of new housing developments had sprung up against farmland. And from nearly every location in the city we shot, the power plant rose up in the background.

"Topographies of Interference" is meant to provoke viewers into thinking about information services' material presence in the world, and to relocate the vision of large tech companies as primarily urban centers to one that highlights their presence in more rural communities, which often receives less attention.

Long Time No Ocean: Intro

Lynn Sullivan

[View the image \(/issue3/ecologies/sullivan/image\)](/issue3/ecologies/sullivan/image)

Within my works, narrative seems to slip out of grasp in forms full of erasures, excisions, and obscurations.

Words on flagging banners are cut out, with letters left hanging; phrases like “Long Time No Ocean” become difficult to read. Language here functions in dual ways as both a communicative tool and an evocative form. In the absence, concealment, or constant rebuilding, a space opens up for a shift of meaning and it is this moment of shift that I am particularly interested in.



Make(r) Space, Making Space: A Media Ecology in Two Parts: Intro

Melissa Rogers

[View the Maker Space Article \(https://storify.com/MelissaRogers17/csa2014-makerspace-a-media-ecology\)](https://storify.com/MelissaRogers17/csa2014-makerspace-a-media-ecology)

Abstract:

The pop-up maker space hosted by the Media Interventions working group of the Cultural Studies Association at the 2014 annual meeting, “Ecologies: Relations of Culture, Matter, and Power,” is a collaborative intervention into the typical structure of academic conferences in the interdisciplinary humanities and social sciences, whose genres and formats tend to privilege established scholars, disciplinary paradigms, the new, and above all a mindset in which the resources attached to “professionalization” are governed by scarcity. Held concurrently with the main conference schedule at the University of Utah’s historic Pierre Lassonde House, the maker space showcases the work of artists, activists, media practitioners, performers, researchers, and amateur “makers,” inviting conference attendees to engage the material not merely as spectators but as active participants in the collective meanings of the event. In doing so, it quite literally *makes space* for multimodal methods of knowledge production that decenter the individual and scramble the dominant temporalities of academic labor. This two-part essay describes the maker space as media ecology in the process of unfolding across multiple time frames (and time zones) and through unevenly distributed agencies as well as affective states. The first part documents the process of *making a space for making*, while the second attempts to partially capture and re-present the event itself through digital photography, video clips, sound snippets, links, maps, and other media ancillary to the maker space. In reading, watching, listening, touching, clicking, and otherwise attending to what we are making, you become integrated into the circuitry of our affections: the queer collection of things that comprise media ecologies.

[View the Maker Space Article \(https://storify.com/MelissaRogers17/csa2014-makerspace-a-media-ecology\)](https://storify.com/MelissaRogers17/csa2014-makerspace-a-media-ecology)

Part I. Make(r) Space: Collaborations and Collections

Melissa Rogers

Who are makers, and what are their spaces? What counts as making, to whom, and how might these contested definitions of making be productively juxtaposed with the scholarly approaches on display at the conferences of professional associations? These are the questions with which I was confronted when Jamie Skye Bianco, chair of the Media Interventions working group of the Cultural Studies Association, contacted me about the opportunity to co-organize a pop-up maker space at the 2014 annual meeting, whose theme, “Ecologies: Relations of Culture, Matter, and Power,” seemed to lend itself particularly well to queer and feminist reconceptualizations of what constitutes “culture,” “matter,” and “power,” and of what “relations” between these terms might consist. Indeed, the queer inflections of “relations” stand out to me in thinking about the ongoing process of the maker space’s assembling. What relationships and, more importantly, modes of relating could the maker space foster? And how would academics, the majority of whom may not identify primarily as makers, *relate* to the body of work on display in the space, which does not inhabit the familiar shapes of panel presentations, roundtables, or seminars? To rephrase a question repeatedly raised in the workshops on cultural production and the Media Interventions sessions at the 2013 meeting of the CSA, “Beyond Disciplinarity: Interventions in Cultural Studies and the Arts,” how might interdisciplinary scholars articulate responses to critical-creative work that does not present itself in the form of critique?

The following is my attempt to open up some of the questions raised in the making of this year’s iteration of Media Interventions, and to reflect *in media res* on the experimental and tactical praxis of getting things done within institutional constraints. As of this writing, the maker space has yet to happen or is still happening; I therefore write about the event in the present, future, and conditional tenses, cobbling together what will be the space’s pastpresents: interweavings, layerings, and relays across time.¹ Like many do-it-yourself (DIY) cultural producers, I find myself shifting between the roles of archivist, organizer, bricoleur, and participant observer, simultaneously working out the logistics of the maker space in real time, while also optimistically anticipating its afterlives and the many

potential worlds that it conjures. Some of these worlds will be documented and mediated in the second part of this piece, which will serve as a more extensive yet still partial archive of the maker space as media ecology, a multimodal collection of artifacts and fragments that is collaboratively curated. In the spirit of the Media Interventions working group, which highlights practitioner perspectives on prefigurative media politics,² I offer the process of *making space* as one that is as eminently practical as it is improvisatory, as speculative as it is theoretical, and as material as it is imaginary. I argue that the pop-up maker space is prototypical of a set of emergent, queer feminist new materialist practices and projects. Such projects might be versions of what Katie King has called boundary object-oriented feminism, or what Jamie Skye Bianco has called #Q3C: queer creative critical compositionist method.³ Taken together, these queer feminist methods are ways of worlding that gather together things, bodies, and affects in accumulations of complex agencies, a *making* that is seriously playful and affectionately, if always improperly, practiced.

The idea for the maker space grew out of conversations around a set of interrelated panels, performances, workshops, and seminars at the 2013 conference which stressed theoretical and practical approaches to making and doing in the form of performance, code, zines, and art/activist digital media production, including music, video, and online platforms. I experienced the four days in Chicago as a tour de force, as invigorating as it was exhausting. My first visit to the CSA as a new member and as a participant in one of two Media Interventions panels, I was struck by the palpable urgency with which those at the conference were attempting to create more sustaining and, hopefully, more sustainable forms of knowledge production than the dominant ones circulating in the humanities, many of whose disciplines are caught up in paranoid discourse about their own demise while also experiencing the real effects of shrinking funds. The multimodal experiments on display were accompanied by discussions of disciplinary legibility and the uneven value of different kinds of academic labor in the neoliberal restructurings of the university, discussions to which the precarity of contingent faculty, staff, and graduate student life were not incidental. These conversations were both frustrated and hopeful, and in the months after the conference they extended across social media as well as off it, dispersed in a network with loosely grouped nodes: New York, Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Salt Lake City, and San Diego, among others.

Having volunteered at the *Lateral* general interest meeting at CSA 2013, in the fall of that year I helped peer review some pieces for the “Queer the Noise” thread with fellow doctoral students Christina Nadler and Megan Turner, and in January of 2014 Jamie Skye Bianco reached out to me with the invitation to co-organize the maker space and help assemble the “Ecologies” thread, which would archive and remediate the work of the participants in this year’s Media Interventions. So began a process that would take almost six months from start to finish, drawing together a group of collaborators whose affiliations with each other register differing degrees of intimacy and familiarity, and whose positions relative to

academic, art, and activist worlds are various (and variable). Over the course of that time the participants, Jamie, and I coordinated via dozens of email threads, multiple video chats, phone calls, Google docs, and virtual calendars, in addition to working out details remotely with members of the conference organizing committee, the host committee at the University of Utah, staff at both the University of Utah and our home institutions, and a number of third (or fourth or fifth) parties who would help us ship large quantities of technology and materials as well as rent, borrow, and move necessary equipment. The result will be truly collaborative in the sense that tremendous, if necessarily uneven, forms of labor have converged in articulating or producing space as well as time, not to mention the material artifacts that will populate the space.⁴ Each of the participants will formally present some version of their work at one of two scheduled Media Interventions panels, and will be included in a standing exhibit in the maker space for part of the conference while also contributing to other loosely scheduled activities. In addition to the participants slated for the Media Interventions panel, I put out a general call to the CSA membership inviting participation, and also directly targeted artists, academics, and practitioners in my circle of friends as well as those recommended by friends, acquaintances, and colleagues. The responses, when I received them, were generally enthusiastic, but most of those I invited were unable to attend due to lack of funds, impending graduation, or other circumstances that made transporting artwork and people long distances unfeasible.

Running alongside of or, according to the University of Utah's campus map, directly across from the main conference site and concurrent with its schedule, we hoped the maker space could provide a parallel mode of engagement with the topics of the annual meeting, amplifying aspects of the conference theme yet offering an alternative set of conversations and goings-on. Slated to take place in the University's Pierre Lassonde Entrepreneur Center, a Civil War-era home with two porches, three small rooms, a kitchen, and a garden, the maker space would shift conference attendees into another *place* altogether. The standing exhibit of participants' work would invite viewers to slow down and take in the material at an entirely different pace than that of the rest of the conference, whose back-to-back panels, plenaries, receptions, and business meetings will leave many of us tired, cranky, and socially and mentally overstimulated on top of being stressed out from lack of regular exercise, departure from normal eating habits, jet lag, and a generalized sense of being broke from having spent too much money to be able stay the duration of the proceedings.⁵

Additionally, workshops, performances, and informal and spontaneous acts of DIY "making" in this oddly domestic professional space would encourage attendees to use as many senses and as many parts of the brain as possible, to dialog with others more than they might in a question and answer session or in fleeting chances to "network" between panels, and most importantly, to *have fun*. We are, of course, hoping for a slightly different kind of fun than the sometimes perverse pleasures of critique or the thrill of listening to a famous scholar deliver a beautiful and devastating keynote. It is a kind of fun that cannot be engineered or

produced through “gamification,” a fun that is uneasily recuperated into the logics of “creative industries,” in spite of attempts to do so. Of course, we always risk complicity; any space that claims to be a maker space will run such a risk in light of the corporate branding of The Maker Movement, which promises to churn out entrepreneurs and founders of start-ups with costly events and technology that is always already “innovative,” whatever its applications or production processes. In this sense it is a fitting irony that the locale for the maker space is named after a millionaire alumnus whose success has generated hefty investments for the University of Utah in the form of the Lassonde Institute for young entrepreneurs. A Civil War house situated squarely on the frontier, bursting with entrepreneurial futures and military pasts—how to occupy such a domicile masquerading as museum with queers and feminists, crafters and geeks? How to *make space* in such a place? The negotiations among these pastpresents and possible futures are complicated to say the least, and by no means finished or even able to be finished, remaining productively open and *in the making*.

Because the event has yet to happen, I will not make any claims to capture the meanings that will no doubt spring up amongst the work on display, nor will I attempt to predict exactly what forms making will take in the space, although I would venture to guess that they will range from the low-tech to the high-tech and include knitting, crochet, sound walks, musical experimentation, on-the-spot short video production, Lego art, zine-making, coding, circuit bending, dance, yoga, and, in the best-case scenario, the making of friends both temporary and permanent. Such meanings and makings are provisional, dependent upon those present in the space as well as the materials at hand. In this sense, *the space is what we make it* and *what is made of it* before, during, and after the fact. Queerly, it has a life or lives of its own, imbricated with the lives of the people, things, and technologies that bring it into being and that continue to attend to it after the space itself has been disassembled, its component parts redistributed.

Make with us.

View Part II. Making Space: Media Ecologies

1 My mentor Katie King describes pastpresents in her online essay “Pastpresents: Playing Cat’s Cradle with Donna Haraway” as “a species of naturecultures” that demonstrate “how the past and the present continually converge, collapse and co-invent each other” (<http://playingcatscradle.blogspot.com/2010/10/katie-king-womens-studies-university-of.html> (<http://playingcatscradle.blogspot.com/2010/10/katie-king-womens-studies-university-of.html>)). For King, pastpresents are the knotting together of multiple worlds and stories, a disorganizing or a reorienting of space and time that is as sensory as a game of cat’s cradle, both uncomfortable and fun.

(<http://www.culturalstudiesassociation.org/content.asp?contentid=38>

(<http://www.culturalstudiesassociation.org/content.asp?contentid=38>)).

3 In “Toward a Feminist Boundary Object-Oriented Ontology,” King offers boundary object-oriented feminism or feminist boundary object-oriented ontology as a queer method for working across contexts and disciplinary knowledges from the inside. At the center of such a practice are boundary objects: “workaround things, concepts, processes, even routines that permit coordination, sometimes collaboration, without consensus (non-conscious or conscious)” (<http://fembooo.blogspot.com/> (<http://fembooo.blogspot.com/>)). Boundary objects help us notice the affective investments we have in the making of the edges of our worlds, at the same time enabling us to do the work of translation that is so crucial to transdisciplinary work. Using a slightly different approach that resonates with King’s attention to affect’s role in the making of knowledges, in “Queer Urban Composites: Any City or ‘Bellona’ (After Samuel Delany),” Bianco posits queer creative critical compositionism, a method she shorthanded as #Q3C at the 2013 CSA meeting, as a way for thinking about the affective modulations and transmediations of queer experiments in digital and analog modes: “There is no outside, no slow, clear space of objectivity from which our critical discoveries may reveal a sustaining and sustainable truth. We are captured inside the procedurality of cross-mediation, queerly practicing, consciously or not, a digi-logics of affective analysis—the motions of making, of what I call *queer creative critical compositionism*” (<http://adanewmedia.org/2013/11/issue3-bianco/> (<http://adanewmedia.org/2013/11/issue3-bianco/>)).

4 Here, romanticizing collaboration (to borrow from one of the seminar titles at the 2014 conference) is not really possible, nor is it desirable. I’m arguing that people don’t need to see each other or even consistently interact for collaboration to happen. Most of the time collaboration is about who (and what) shows up at different moments, and what is available for working with. Collaborators may think they agree, may vehemently disagree, or not even know an agreement is at stake, but they “get along” in that they *make things happen*, sometimes without knowing each other but sometimes at a depth of intimacy that is not consciously available to them.

5 Thankfully the discourse around how to make conferences, academic and otherwise, “safe” spaces that do not negatively impact participants’ mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing is becoming more sophisticated. Many conferences are implementing safer spaces policies or agreements, making provisions for neurodiversity and ranges of ability, and building in what we could call pressure valves for what are usually politically and intellectually fraught events. Such provisions might include designated quiet areas or areas for stretching and yoga, reminders about available exercise facilities, repeated invitations on the part of presenters to appropriate or rearrange conference spaces however members of the audience may

need to, the printing of presentation scripts and handouts in larger fonts, the inclusion of verbal descriptions of images, the use of sign language interpreters, the availability of gender neutral and family restrooms, reminders not to use perfume or other scented products, the appointment of volunteers to help those requiring assistance, and scheduling events in buildings with elevators, ramps, automatic doors, wide aisles, and flexible seating arrangements. Additionally, travel grants, small fellowships or stipends, and rideshares attempt to alleviate the financial strain of attending conferences, however meal plans and established networks of hosting and transportation arrangements could be more available.

Part II. Making Space: Media Ecologies

Melissa Rogers

At the time of this writing, the maker space at CSA 2014 has long since been disassembled, its parts stuffed into an old army duffel sporting new duct tape patches from its hard journey to Utah—a bursting sack full of odds and ends that got stuck in the airport in Denver on the return home before arriving in Washington, D.C., a day behind me. According to the scale at the baggage check, the duffel weighed 35 lbs., hefty enough that bystanders who saw me lugging it through Salt Lake City casually asked me if I was running away from home.

In some senses, the maker space in Lassonde House was a kind of home for those of us at the CSA who were seeking an elusive *something else* from our conference experience: meaningful conversation about our work around a table rather than on one side of it; forms of critique as playful and generous as they are rigorous and toothy; an immersive, sensory, even erotic way to practice intellectual life that could encompass all the pleasures found between the materialities of page, screen, lens, keyboard, mic, yarn, Lego bricks, other bodies. The space for this kind of ludic labor was quite literally unpacked from the luggage of half a dozen artists, activists, and academics, transforming the inside of Lassonde House into a standing exhibit, a theater, a workshop, and an interactive piece of art. The house, which already exhibited the ghosts of its former lives through framed original blueprints and enlarged photographs of grim-faced Civil War officers in uniform on the front porch, underwent further transformations over the course of the conference by hosting an after-hours dance party that spilled onto the front lawn, as well as a performance that unfolded in its small side garden for an intimate audience actively engaged in its production and documentation.

In some senses, Lassonde House was an ideal location for the maker space. It is positioned directly across the street from the University Guest House, a hotel and conference center that allowed attendees to participate in conference activities without leaving the University of Utah's sprawling campus for anything besides food and entertainment. With its hardwood floors and staircase, porches, deep-set windows, and an antique door serving as boardroom

table, aesthetically it is much more interesting than traditional conference spaces. The “historic” quality of the house, however, precluded its occupants from calling attention to bigger structures of which the house, and the university itself, are a part.

For example, upon arriving in Utah we were told that one of our participants, Lilly Marsh, could not create a temporary knitted sculpture on the outside of the house as she had planned; some administrative offices are located in the upstairs of the building and the house came to stand in for the public face of the university. Her conceptual sculpture, which would have visually and texturally represented the connection between past and present with huge knitted “roots” emerging from the front of the house, essentially could not be vouched for as part of the university’s vision for itself, despite its ability to be easily removed from the property after the conference. The fact that the house bears the name of a millionaire alumnus and donor to the university plays no small role here. The university’s entrepreneurial future, its hopes for “innovation” and the creation of “opportunity,” is attached to this house in the middle of what was once a militarized frontier caught up in the machinations of nation-building. Aspects of the house’s past remain selectively preserved, displayed and contained on the walls, yet our installation had to be mindful of the hefty investment in the house’s renovations: its shiny floors, air conditioning, alarm systems, and automatic door locks. Meanwhile, the content of the work installed in the space interrogated the connections between infrastructure, technological innovation, and ecological landscapes. How, then, to reconcile inside and outside, micro and macro—how to do what the conference theme called for when the structures of the conference itself prevented it?

Having the maker space in an historic house highlighted how academic conferences can become insular events, their modes of social engagement contingent upon the availability and accessibility of particular kinds of spaces and structures. Those who had no interest in making or playing, or attending a performance or screening, could have gone the entire conference ostensibly without setting foot in Lassonde House, whereas those who happened to wander in could find themselves in the space for ten minutes or an hour or an afternoon. Others, a core group of six to eight volunteers who also had work on display, were attached to the maker space for greater periods of time in order to greet visitors, and also out of the practical necessity of making sure the expensive technology loaned us by our universities was not left unattended.

Thus, time as well as space affected the kinds of interactions it was possible to have during the conference, and the kinds of things it was possible to actually produce in the maker space itself. The packed concurrent scheduling meant that slower activities with longer durations, such as starting a knitting project, building a Lego sculpture, or putting together a zine, often could not easily overlap with the standard twenty-minute presentation or panel session of an hour and a half. Making a friendship bracelet out of rubber bands, printing a postcard, or folding a paper airplane, on the other hand, allowed casual users of

the space to drop in and have a conversation over activities that were not intensive in terms of attention or time. Neither of these forms of engagement is preferable to the other; they pose challenges, however, for fully integrating maker spaces into established conference formats. What should we reasonably expect conference attendees *to make* over the course of a three- or four-day event, besides professional contacts? More importantly, how can professional associations and the universities that host them support those cultural producers who facilitate the creation of spaces like the one at the 2014 conference, such that other forms of the intellectual labor of making and doing become possible?

A media ecologies approach to maker spaces and making spaces puts these tensions on display without attempting to resolve or fix them. As a method for aggregating or tactically assembling collections of media and their relationships, media ecologies draw attention to the socialities and materialities of media beyond static formulations of production, distribution, and consumption. As partial maps or snapshots of social scenes in progress, media ecologies allow us to notice what it is we are doing with different media, from trash to plastic to wire to video to sound to code, and to ask how such media came to be available to us as well as what we expect such media to do in our (mis)use of them. This kind of noticing, a lingering over the intentional if improvisatory assembly of media forms, is political in a world saturated by media that compete for our attention while simultaneously attempting to hide the technologies and material conditions that bring them into being.

The media ecology presented here, compiled in Storify and comprised of digital photography, tweets, and six-second looping video from the mobile app Vine, documents and remediates activities at the maker space from its setup and installation on Wednesday, May 28th to its disassembly on Saturday, May 31st. No media ecology is complete; this particular media ecology represents my perspective on the events as an organizer and participant incapable of being in more than one place at once, despite my best attempts. As such it can only begin to touch upon the many kinds of making happening in the space, including the making of social worlds real and imagined. Additionally, the affordances of Storify allow me to tell stories of media ecologies in a very specific way, using only the social media platforms with which it is compatible and organizing elements of the story into a linear, scrolling narrative. This might seem incompatible with the form of the maker space itself, where many things were happening at once and no one could tell *the whole story* of what was going on. Nevertheless, I'm holding out for different and multiplying media ecologies where new and old forms of making intermingle, where the social and the thingly mediate each other. Stories capacious enough for such ecologies have yet to be invented.

Storify below, or [View on Storify \(https://storify.com/MelissaRogers17/csa2014-makerspace-a-media-ecology\)](https://storify.com/MelissaRogers17/csa2014-makerspace-a-media-ecology)

#CSA2014 Makerspace: A Media Ecology

The makerspace at the 2014 meeting of the Cultural Studies Association, "Ecologies: Relations of Culture, Matter, and Power," was a media ecology in progress, taking place in the historic Pierre Lassonde House on the University of Utah's campus from May 29-31st.

I arrived in Utah two days early to familiarize myself with Lassonde House, meet with artists, and organize the materials for the makerspace. Thankfully, the organizers of the CSA and the University of Utah made available cheap dorm housing for attendees of the conference that served as my home base.

Getting supplies ready for the #makerspace at #csa2014 tomorrow. Any crafty folks around??
@The_CSA pic.twitter.com/y3DTw1bY2a

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17  @The_CSA · 3 YEARS AGO

Clearly these #legos are trying to escape so they can get to the #makerspace and get some action.
#csa2014 pic.twitter.com/YfchJfyyJG

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Ok I think we're ready to plmakerspacespdii #CSA2014Apic.twitter.com/QeKjMSSGeUSSGeU

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

After an exhausting day of travel, the participants in the Media Interventions working group came together as a team to set up the makerspace, install their work, and share a meal. Special thanks to Christina Nadler, who volunteered her support and labor for the space throughout the conference!

We have shiny lights! Thanks @ChrissyNadler and @spikenlilli #csa2014 #makerspace
pic.twitter.com/kG2gsDWS1u

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Come play! The #csa2014 #makerspace is all set up! pic.twitter.com/2hp8mUeHE4 v
@MelissaRogers17 @The_CSA

 JARAH @JARAHMOESCH  @MelissaRogers17 · 3 YEARS AGO

#bottlesNbones, @spikenlilli's piece for media interventions, providing the soundtrack to the
#csa2014 #makerspacevine.co/v/Mddv69QwDj7

 @ · 3 YEARS AGO

Nicole Starosielski's "Signal Tracks." The Cloud is Below Your Feet. #csa2014
#makerspacevine.co/v/Mdd6Z9UKAVJ

 @ · 3 YEARS AGO

Lilly Marsh's knitted wire sculptures. Come knit with Lilly in
csa2014a2makerspacespic.twitter.com/MC040H9j1NH9j1N

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Makers Space! in the Lassonde House #CSA2014 pic.twitter.com/mHje37sdsC

 CULTURAL STUDIES @THE_CSA ↗ @MelissaRogers17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Sunrise Yoga/Stretch #CSA2014 Where: Lassonde House Lawn When: Friday and Saturday Time: 7:15
am - 8:15 am pic.twitter.com/Ooc6PBLAh6

 CULTURAL STUDIES @THE_CSA ↗ @MelissaRogers17 · 3 YEARS AGO

In case you need to come relax.... #csa2014 #makerspace pic.twitter.com/ID7Zo3wGXH

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Maren Waldman setting up for her performance, "Postcards to Earth," Saturday at 1csa2014.
makerspacepic.twitter.com/AGrVCLo87dAGrVCLo87d

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Julian Gill-Peterson and Christina Nadler rocked the makerspace open mic with their performance of Deleuze's "Difference and Repetition." Their polyvocal rendition inspired laughter and some seriously playful discussion about the act of reading as well as the pleasures and difficulties of learning, unlearning, and relearning.

Julian Gill-Peterson
@gpjulian

My career as a performance artist starts and ends tonight at 8PM, everyone. Come to the
Maker's Space to gawk at [csa2014a2csa14csa14](#)

 @spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

8pm in Lassonde: @ChrissyNadler+I give an embodied performance of Deleuze's Difference and

Repetitcsa2014a2csa14cpic.twitter.com/45Ho2HlmmMHlmmM

 JULIAN GILL-PETERSON @GPJULIAN  @ChrissyNadler · · 3 YEARS AGO

[jarah](#)

@jarahmoesch

Just saw an amazing embodied performance by [@gpjulian](#) & [@ChrissyNadler](#) of Deleuze's Difference & Repetition! Tour dates [csa2014a2CSA14CSA14](#)

 @MelissaRogers17 · 3 YEARS AGO

In addition to scheduled screenings of artists' work, such as "Topographies of Interference," audiovisual work was looping in Lassonde House during unscheduled activities. Watch "Topographies of Interference" in the Lateral "Ecologies" thread.

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17


[@hellabrohemian](#) and Jocelyn Monahan's short film, "Topographies of Interference" [stcsa2014atmakerspace014The_CSA](#)space! [@The_CSA](#)

 @The_CSA · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17


Topographies of Interference shot 2014, in and around Council Bluffs, Iowa

 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Topographies of Interference, google's infrastructure is visible on landscape but name is not. Also aggressively greenwashing.

 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Q: voice-over, narrative, documentary? Letting aesthetics speak, the voice of energy.

 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Google is a ghost. [@hellabrohemian](#)


 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Farmers signing hundred year leases: what will happen to the buildings as data shrinks?


[@hellabrohemian](#)

 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17


The structures are hidden, even the address doesn't help. Fleeting presence on google ear[hellabrohemian](#) and Jocelyn Monahan

 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Public records digging and blueprints may be next step. Topographies of Interference [#csa2014](#) [#makerspace](#)

 3 YEARS AGO

Participants in the space were encouraged to experiment with unfamiliar tools, technologies, and media. While some of these efforts resulted in "finished" objects, like friendship bracelets, zines, or Nicole's loomed arm warmers (modeled by Jamie) below, the emphasis was less on making something finished and more on having fun in spite of the inevitable failures and frustrations of the creative process. Some of these creations were attached to a woven latticework created by Lilly Marsh on the Lassonde staircase in the center of the exhibit space, while others were worn throughout the conference.

[@kimklinger](#), first up on the loom! And not afraid to fail! pic.twitter.com/66FxxbduIE

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Friendship is magic! [#csa2014](#) [#makerspace](#) pic.twitter.com/EXOS7JVJAJ

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

A fitting of knitty bits! [@n_str's](#) loomed creapic pic.twitter.com/7H3EnbC2NcbC2Nc

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Werk! [#makerspace](#) pic.twitter.com/DXLvoRb7fj

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Getting knitty with Lilly Marsh in the [#csa2014](#) [#makerspace](#)! pic.twitter.com/KRZew21PI4

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17  @The_CSA · 3 YEARS AGO

If you want a postcard of your time at #csa2014, come and get one!
[#makerspacevine.co/v/MddPx6H1nnn](https://makerspacevine.co/v/MddPx6H1nnn)

 @ · 3 YEARS AGO

some knitty #csa2014 #makerspace creations of mine.vine.co/v/MdTh5XUr57i

 @ · 3 YEARS AGO


Queer intimacies at the #csa14 #makerspace pic.twitter.com/OISrPU8Epi

 JARAH @JARAHMOESCH  @ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

The makerspace was organized by the participants in the Media Interventions working group of the CSA. Media Interventions highlights scholarly and activist approaches to alternative, citizens', community, and DIY media, inviting practitioner perspectives on prefigurative and interventionist media politics. As a working group, Media Interventions had two scheduled panels in the makerspace that remediated the work already on display for the duration of the conference. The first panel showcased the work of Katherine Behar, Melissa Rogers, Lynn Sullivan, and Jocelyn Monahan and Jeff Curran. Versions of this work is available in the "Ecologies" Lateral thread. Unfortunately, my documentation of this panel is somewhat lacking since I was presenting. Check out #csa2014 on twitter for more conversation surrounding this work.


[Jamie Skye Bianco](#)
@spikenlilli

Today at 2p - Media Interventions 1 Ecologies panel - makerSpace maker/artist/scholars present their work w/work in exhibition- in Lassonde!

 3 YEARS AGO

[Karen Gregory, PhD](#)
@claudiakincaid

Listening to [@MelissaRogers17](#) talk about her fantastic DIY workshops and pedagogy.
[#CSA2014](#)

 3 YEARS AGO

[Karen Gregory, PhD](#)
@claudiakincaid

"Failure is on everybody's lips these days..." but perhaps we set up "spaces where failure isn't"; [MelissaRogers17](#)'s world" [@MelissaRogers17](#)

 [@MelissaRogers17](#) · 3 YEARS AGO

It's hard to say in advance what kinds of creations will come out of a makerspace! The space offered a number of tools whose unpredictable applications ranged from the modification of conference nametags to the construction of googly-eyed paper airplanes to Lego spaceships to queer knitty bits. Below, the table of the boardroom, constructed from the historic Civil War-era door of Lassonde House, became a surface for playing, hacking, doodling, stamping, building, crafting, and making friends. Our makerspace was fairly low-tech and mostly analog, moving the conversation about makerspaces away from an emphasis on 3D printing/scanning, robotics and physical computing, and code. How are "old" technologies, like knitting and stamping, still practically and theoretical useful for all kinds of making?

Every conf should have a #makerspace where one can erase their name. #csa2014 @MelissaRogers17
pic.twitter.com/SMLQkwZEiw pic.twitter.com/GMh51nJ1Nf

 WILKIE @WILKIEII  @MelissaRogers17 · 3 YEARS AGO

Grumpy Marxist plane. #CSA2014 pic.twitter.com/j8qzfagPSL

 PETER CHRISTIANSEN @THETURNIPMASTER  @The_CSA · 3 YEARS AGO

makerspace makerspace makerspace makerspace makerspace #csa2014vine.co/v/Md0jOAMJ0XQ

 @ · 3 YEARS AGO

@ChrissyNadler's wire wocsa2014a2makerspacespic.twitter.com/UoFrOaZKt2aZKt2

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

I love my #csa2014 #makerspace friendship bracelet from @jarahmoesch
pic.twitter.com/UYuDbj3cMH

 CHRISTINA NADLER @CHRISSYNADLER · 3 YEARS AGO

Lilly knitted this with wire in a couple hours at the #makerspace! Attached to the Lassonde staircase.
#csa2014 pic.twitter.com/2imqUHAPZz

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

james LL
@w0lfwood

the maker space will not be gamified #CSA2014

 @spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO


In addition to the Media Interventions panels, several other sessions were scheduled in the makerspace based on the

conference's general call for papers. Anthony Blacksher's "Sociopoetix: Converging the Art, Archive, Performance, and Pedagogy of Spoken Word Poetry" is below.

[Jamie Skye Bianco](#)

@spikenlilli

Anthony Blacksher - 'sociopoetix' - spoken _wordmakerSpacemakerSpace at
[nowsoCSA14](#)[noCSA2014](#) #CSA2014

 3 YEARS AGO

Don't mProfAntBlackBlack in the Maker Space right nCSA2014Apic.twitter.com/DL2e2uMcb7uMcb7

 JODI D @JODI_LYN · 3 YEARS AGO

[james LL](#)

@w0lfwood

racism is a gulf oil spill cleaned up with small pox blankets #CSA2014 #sociopoetix

 @ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[james LL](#)

@w0lfwood

inspire the public to critique their own cultures. #maker #remix #CSA2014

 @ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

Of course, improvisation abounds in makerspaces. Rob Gehl put together a visually stunning pitch for efficiently transforming higher education. But the audience had to sign a nondisclosure agreement promising not to let the cat out of the bag on social media so...guess you had to be there.

@The_CSA you're missrobertwgehlwgehl's brilliant pitch for tranhighered
pic.twitter.com/JbdzkAI0kqJbdzkAI0kq

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

@robertwgehl explaining #researchflow, the latest in higher educational disruption technology.
#csa2014 #makerspace pic.twitter.com/w8YYSh6MWc

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

How many cultural theorists does it take to implement proper mood lighting? How many DJs does it take to get academics dancing? How many bottles of wine does it take to get tenured professors to socialize with graduate students? Every conference needs a dance party. (*The answers: 8-12; only 1, with some help from All the Single Ladies; can't remember but it's a lot, and it's going to be awkward.*)

@robertwgehl @spikenlilli and @jarahmoesch cordially invite you to a dance party in the #makerspace @The_CSAvine.co/v/Md9DIgJTpiZ

 @ · 3 YEARS AGO

make dance!vine.co/v/MdVW3OtJxhP

 @ · 3 YEARS AGO

you know what it isvine.co/v/MdV7EI0dPlz

 @ · 3 YEARS AGO

How many cultural studies scholars does it take to hang a curtain from a light bulb? #csa2014
pic.twitter.com/Dj24XB1CFc

 CHRISTINA NADLER @CHRISSYNADLER  @MelissaRogers17 · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

@ChrissyNadler @gpjulian I think of the seminar as a dance floor.

 @ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

The final day at the makerspace included the second Media Interventions panel (featuring the work of Jarah Moesch, Nicole Starosielski, Stephanie Boluk, and Jamie "Skye" Bianco), Maren Waldman's performance "Postcards to Earth," Andy Rice's presentation of the documentary-in-progress "Spirits of Rebellion," and Lilly Marsh's praxis session "Ecologies of Creativity: Historical Shifts in Hand Knitting towards Mass Artisanship Cultural Production."

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Packed schedule today at #csa2014 #makerspace: Media Interventions, Postcards to Earth, Spirits of Rebellion, knitting with Lilly. @The_CSA

 @The_CSA · 3 YEARS AGO

Getting ready to hear @chouxsalad, @spikenlilli, Nicole Starosielski, and Jarah Moesh at #CSA2014
pic.twitter.com/1sS6MGfYkL

 CASEY BOYLE @CASEYBOYLE  @spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Starting off with @jarahmoesch's feminist collaborative project [LUcsa2014a2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@jarahmoesch](#), changing definitions of "environment" to account for relationships btw all people and geospatial dif[csa2014s](#) [#csa2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@jarahmoesch](#), need hyperlocal data to prove environmental racism and pollution is real [#csa2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@n_str](#) up next, Signal Tracks [#csa2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@n_str](#) citing Susan Leigh Star on backgrounds, love her work! [#csa2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@n_str](#) what might it mean to track transmission across infrastructure rather than focusing only on discrete sites of connection? [#csa2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@n_str](#) getting to the network's edges in rural locat[icsa2014a2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@n_str](#) tracing connections between transmission, militarism, tourism, and location [#csa2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

Lesbrohème

@MelissaRogers17

@n_str cable locations are sites of conflict in the #anthropocene #csa2014



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

Lesbrohème

@MelissaRogers17

@n_str what tracks do our signals leave? #csa2014



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

Lesbrohème

@MelissaRogers17

@chouxsalad art prices increase when income inequality increases: dealing with the .01%, not even the 1%!! Whoa! #CSA2014



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

Lesbrohème

@MelissaRogers17

@chouxsalad production of fiction as literary genre and production of capital go hand in hand in Speculation: play as productive #CSA2014



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

Lesbrohème

@MelissaRogers17

@chouxsalad game as autopoietic xenocapital itself, absorbing all neuropower and attention #CSA2014



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

Lesbrohème

@MelissaRogers17

@chouxsalad not direct line between speculative gaming and activism but still acknowledgement of virtual power #CSA2014



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

Lesbrohème

@MelissaRogers17

@chouxsalad, class on Money as Medium: what does it mean to take this class at Pratt? #CSA2014



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@chouxsalad](#) Script, local economy inspired by cryptocurrency like bitcoin [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@chouxsalad](#) rise of digital altcoin resembles adoption of paper money in the US, living in digital wild west, new currency everyday [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@chouxsalad](#) Script, form of currency invented by Pratt students, can be exchanged but also form of artistic production [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@chouxsalad](#) students had to negotiate price when they were used to price being determined by inscrutable forces [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Casey Boyle](#)

@caseyboyle

And [@spikenlilli](#) concludes the panel with
&qbottlesNbonesbonesaltNseatNsetrashNtoxicity" about places that cannot be
rem[CSA2014](#). [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) water as medium and mediator [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) polyvocal performative praxis [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) [#saltnsea](#) stench in LA, uncertain and decomposing ecologies [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) unprecedented fish and bird death, release of stinky gases [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) loving "ethico-aestheti[CSA2014](#); [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) "nostalgia of course is a feature of futuri[sCSA2014](#); [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) oxygen is queer, queering [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) water = 7, life = 13 [#CSA2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) mixologies and mixographies of ontology [#csa2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Never eating tilapia again after [@spikenlilli](#)'s perform[acsa2014a2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) accumulation, food chains, transmission of toxicities [#csa2014](#)



@spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) "welcome to the anthropocene, just another day in this postnatural... paradis[csa2014](#); [#csa2014](#)



@spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@ChrissyNadler](#), how do we care or not care about tilapia? Are they victims or just no longer appetizing? [#csa2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) to increase water, save the tilapia and the water fowl, we'd have to remove ppl. Bell peppers are coming from [hcsa2014a2014](#)



@ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO

[Christina Nadler](#)

@ChrissyNadler

"I work in sites where there is no winn[ispikenlilli](#)[piCSA2014i](#) [#CSA2014](#)



@spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

[@spikenlilli](#) we can't just be invested in cute things with [ecsa2014a2014](#)



@spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Maren's performance of Postcards to the Earth moving outside in Lassonde's beautiful side garden! Join us on [thThe_CSA!](#) [@the_csa](#)



@The_CSA · 3 YEARS AGO

Maren's performance at csa2014a2The_CSAepic.twitter.com/pWGFPTa3D9Ta3D9

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 ↻ @The_CSA · 3 YEARS AGO

Collaborative performance happening #now, Postcards to the Earth pic.twitter.com/NAzHOMgSKn

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Andy Rice's screening and discussion of the documentary in progress, Spirits of Rebellion starting soon in [makerspacespaThe_CSAe_csa](#)

 @The_CSA · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Design process as continual problem solving. [#knitting](#) [#csa2014](#) [#makeitwork](#) [#diy](#)

 @ChrissyNadler · 3 YEARS AGO


Lilly Marsh, the doula birthing doll and Thwack, knitted sex toy! [#csa2014](#) pic.twitter.com/uYASv4bGtq

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Great convo between Lilly Marsh and [@wolfwood](#) on computational knitting: the analogy of binary is too simplistic. [#csa2014](#)

 3 YEARS AGO

Lilly's stash, tools, and sculptural wire wocsa2014a2makerspacespic.twitter.com/CSrgs8wzEt8wzEt

 LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Lilly Marsh, what happens when you "unhook" gender and knitting? Moving craft into a queue [csa2014](#). [#csa2014](#)

 @spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

The makerspace was, and is, an experiment in *getting things done* in spite of constraints, *making stuff happen* within institutions and on their fringes, and *working it out*, whatever "it" is at a particular moment in time. Such iterative

collaborations are sometimes easy, sometimes full of friction, but they are the material of our work and they take place within natural cultural ecologies.

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

Thanks SO SO much to everyone who helped make the #makerspace happen: @guattari2600 @hellabrohemian @ChrissyNadler @jarahmoesch ++ #csa2014



@spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

++ and @chouxsalad @n_str @spikenlilli @wilkiei @wolfwood @gpjulian



@spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

++ and of course @robertwgehl and the great folks at @The_CSA and U of U, esp the UGH conference team and Lassonde house



@spikenlilli · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

++ and everyone who came to play make do art dance laugh lego and everyone who contributed who's not on twitter!!



3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

@MelissaRogers17

++ and the mountains and the desert and the salt.



3 YEARS AGO

The last act of making in the space was the repair of the old duffel that transported many of the makerspace materials. The bag eventually arrived home.

The #csa2014 #makerspace can even fix your luggage. Thanks @n_str! :D
pic.twitter.com/POABB0y62N



LESBROHÈME @MELISSAROGERS17 · 3 YEARS AGO

[Lesbrohème](#)

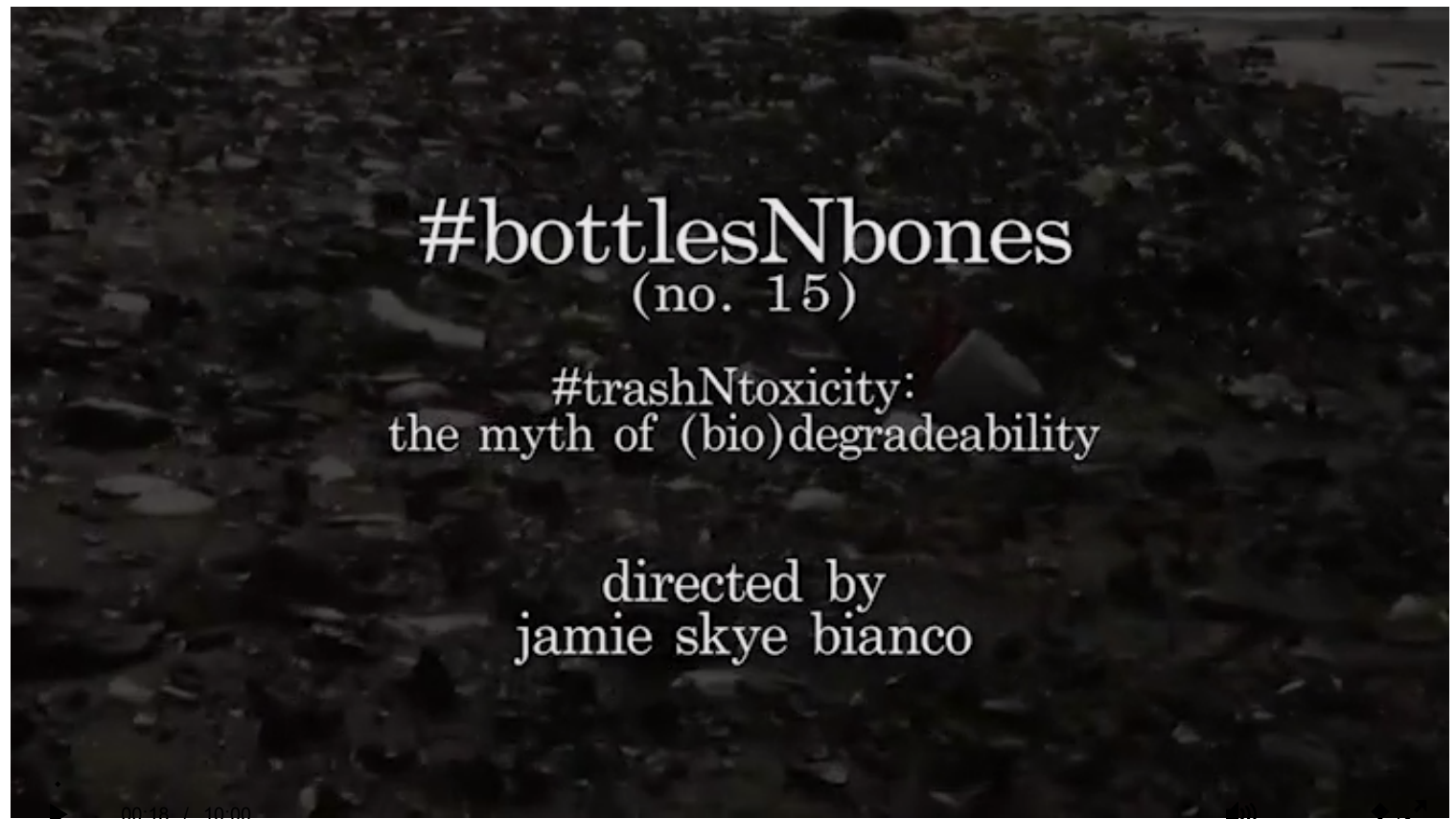
@MelissaRogers17

Whelp. The bag containing the #makerspace didn't get on my denver flight.

#bottlesNbones: Intro

Jamie Skye Bianco

#bottlesNbones is one part of a multi-site project, *#trashNtoxicity* examining the irremediable, abandoned, unrecycleable, and non-biodegradeable postnatural affects of human production.



Theory

[Sora Han - Abolition: At Issue, In Any Case \(/issue3/theory/han\)](#)

[Shana Agid - Making Anyway: Education, Designing, Abolition \(/issue3/theory/agid\)](#)

[David Stein - Full Employment for the Future \(/issue3/theory/stein\)](#)

[Gillian Harkins and Erica R. Meiners - Beyond Crisis: College in Prison through the Abolition Undercommons \(/issue3/theory/harkins-meiners\)](#)

Introduction

Patricia Ticineto Clough

Lateral's Theory Thread offers essays that critically explore the relationship of carceral and educational institutions—but not as alternatives to one another as often has been assumed in various kinds of social activism. The authors of these essays, Sora Han, David Stein, Shana Agid, Gillian Harkins and Erica R. Meiners, assume the tightly knotted interrelationship of prisons and schools and instead address the question posed by Han: is there something, being affirmed in the identity or identification as a “prison abolitionist” today? Recognizing that abolition is an event that has yet to arrive, the authors agree that the prison abolitionist can only take up “the abolition of a society that could have prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society.” The authors draw insight from Fred Moten's and Stefano Harney's writings on the undercommons and are inspired by them to take up questioning everything, making complaints without filing them—being negligent in a negligent set of institutions, leaping from knowledge that prosecutes the state to a performative of making the case. An approach to teaching is offered that foregrounds practices of unlearning, wrenching-open circuits, and encouraging an imagination for abolition—or as Moten and Harney have put it “stepping out of this skeptical of the known into an inadequate confrontation with what exceeds it and oneself....” Suggestions are offered that have been offered before but it is time to take them seriously again. Harkins and Meiners list several but two stand out: for all kinds of organizing, this one: Be prepared to walk away from the work; depersonalize investment, do not “own” the program or the process. For learning institutions of all sorts, this one: Work to develop structurally

significant student boards that have real power to evaluate and shape courses.

Each of the authors startles us, urging us to move from the 'no' of dismantlement to a terrifying "yes" of a giving in giving up and giving way and giving away.

Abolition: At Issue, In Any Case

Sora Han

Toward what does the “prison abolitionist” identity or identification strive? This is far from a simple question. For the history of abolitionism has never been fully present (the abolition of slavery, the abolition of Jim Crow, the abolition of apartheid). In this sense, abolition is an event that has yet to arrive. So, what is, or rather is there something, being affirmed in the identity or identification as a “prison abolitionist” today? How does one identify with something that, as such, has no precedent?

Our thread is organized primarily around Fred Moten and Stefano Harney’s essay, “The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses”^[1]. And we think there is not a better place to begin staging the relation between abolition and that to which we refer as “teaching”, with all the compromised valences such work can carry given the state of the educational system today. Indeed, as if to answer the above question about whether there is something affirmed by prison abolitionism, Moten and Harney seem to answer “yes”, there is something. In this essay, I would like to explore this “yes” as it emerges in Moten and Harney’s essay, and how it might unfold in how we imagine our engagements with law.

Moten and Harney’s essay is divided into seven theses, and is resonant with Jacques Derrida’s essay, “The University Without Condition”, where he concludes with “seven theses, seven propositions, or seven professions of faith.”^[2] This suggests an affinity between the two essays, at the same time that Moten and Harney’s is not reducible to Derrida’s “new Humanities” program. ^[3] We might even read Moten and Harney’s essay as a Derridean performative – in short, as an affirmation, but of a very specific kind, that Derrida describes as that which is “in preparation for a leap that would carry us beyond the power of the performative ‘as if’”. ^[4]

What this means is that Moten and Harney’s “yes” must be read as a response that has been taken over by the specter of unconditional freedom, or the catastrophic idea of questioning everything – including prison abolitionist politics, including Derrida, including the protocols of the university, and all the social conditions many of us dedicate our careers and lives to challenging (stein#bayard-rustin). Furthermore, we must not read their “yes” as a striving toward sovereign forms – whether those be a utopic community, a radical political position, or a personally enlightened self. It can only be the affirmation of the duty to

unconditionally “honor” the flights of the dishonored; a duty to an illimitable anti-strategic, oracular dissidence that is the condition of possibility to hear everywhere the questioning of everything.^[5] If prison abolitionist discourse today strains to articulate a program that is for something instead of against prisons (or even punishment), then I hear Moten and Harney suggest that the only way for the “responsible responsiveness” of a “yes” to arrive is to affirm the beyond toward which the political horizon of prison abolition stretches. This beyond is “the abolition of a society *that could have* prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society.”^[6]

Just before this now familiar language, Moten and Harney ask, “What is, so to speak, the object of abolition?”^[7] Playing with variations of emphasis in their response, we fall upon the idea that the object of abolition is “a society that could have”. The object is “Not so much the abolition of prison, but the abolition of a society that could have... and therefore ... abolition as the founding of a new society.” We are hearing here abolition as a mode of being against social relations invested and investing in promises of sovereignty and self-possession. This object of abolition is not a form of self-possession “that could have” (including the capacity to eliminate anything) but in its unconditional vulnerability to, not simply the relations of material or symbolic possession, but also the very capacity to possess anything, it also becomes something with and in dispossession.

This brings us back to their earlier language on teaching, “The waste lives for those moments beyond₂ teaching when you give away the unexpected beautiful phrase – unexpected, no one has asked, beautiful, it will never come back”^[8]. Moten and Harney’s essay invents from the “no” of dismantlement a terrifying “yes” of a giving in *giving up* and *giving way* and *giving away*. The “yes” of abolition orders, “get wasted.”^[9]

“Get wasted”: This smacks of personal irresponsibility, an absolutely derelict pleasure, a taboo communion, a pathological being in catastrophe. Lest we hear this command through voluntaristic assumptions made in cultural studies of practices we are accustomed to calling “resistance”, let us, as with Moten and Harney’s seven-key improvisation, instead be swept up by and with, it. Or better, we might already be that which is swept, up everywhere, and away en masse.

This, then, is my entry point for observing Moten and Harney’s repeated reference to “negligence”^[10] as the relation of the professionalizing professor to the Undercommons, and its legal resonances. Several years ago, I went to a talk by Patricia Williams, where she offered a compelling exposition of the structure of modern law, in a talk on “The Talking Helix” (<http://www.thenation.com/article/talking-helix>). There she asked us to imagine American modern law as a sort of pyramid, each level variously revealing abstracted legal forms of contract. Or at least, this is how Williams’s exposition remains with me.

At the very bottom, we have contract law that regulates the obligations voluntarily created between private individuals. Above this, property law, which regulates the kinds of expectations private individuals can be said to possess in various material and immaterial objects. Above this, tort law, which regulates the duties expected and owed between private actors by the social value of personal responsibility. Above this, criminal law, which regulates the duties expected and owed between private individuals to obey the state's moral order. Above this, civil and criminal procedural laws, which regulate the duties expected and owed between injured legal subjects to seek fair legal resolution. And finally, constitutional law, which regulates the duties expected and owed between various republican institutions.^[11]

Moten and Harney's exploration of "negligence," opens up onto tort law, and in particular, tort law's derivation of causes of action and remedies based on assumptions of social responsibility. Tort law, or what is commonly referred to as "personal injury law," is where we see the elaboration of the notorious "reasonable man" standard that determines and measures breaches of social responsibility, individual fault, personal harm and claimable damages or injunctions. The word, "tort" comes from the Latin, *tortus*, meaning "something twisted, wrung or crooked," and is the past participle of *torquere* (a physics-terminology). Tort law, then, is the regulation of social responsibilities that have been twisted, wrung or crooked. Well before the specialized debates about the legality of torture under American constitutional and international humanitarian law, here we find Moten and Harney's elevation of the question of torture's embeddedness in "negligence" at the heart of tort law. We might say that tort law is *the regulation of the tortures and torque of social responsibility*, saturating the reified notion of torture in criminal procedure and lawful warfare.

We cannot overstate the significance of Moten and Harney's move that restages in the idea of professionalization as negligence a set of questions about personal and social responsibility as *the tortious torture of political life*. Negligence widens the image of official torture of state captives to a prior, invisible, image of society's tortious torture of socialities against society. So while the charge of negligence seemingly tempers the presumption of radicalism in certain prosecutorial affects, it actually presents a far more terrifying sense that nothing can save us from this more diffuse and acceptable form of tortious torture that is social responsibility. Except that this is always at issue, in any case, from the most minor of tort cases to the most distinguished of human rights cases.^[12]

So let us contrast the metaphor of tort law with the metaphor of criminal law.^[13] When we attempt to make a case through the metaphor of criminal law, we must assume the position of the prosecutor who must gather enough evidence to convince the jury "beyond a reasonable doubt" of the state's guilt of a crime against the victim (that must necessarily be other to us in our performance as prosecutor). In contrast, when we attempt to make a case through the

metaphor of tort law, we are symbolically representative of the plaintiff, who must show that there was a duty that the defendant (the university, for example) breached, that this breach caused harms to us, and that this harm requires either monetary or injunctive relief. Inherently, within tort law, the plaintiff affirmatively pleads, in contrast to criminal law where the state affirmatively prosecutes. Already, even in this cursory disambiguation of negligence and criminality, we can see how profoundly this would shift our roles as teachers and students of abolition, from prosecutor to plaintiff. The latter role is paradoxical and yet it is from this paradoxical role that something more affirmative than state affirmation might appear. This is precisely the prophesy negligence contains.

Moten and Harney might be read to be pleading the negligence of the university (and especially its professional critics, including, as they must, Derrida)- that is, a failure to abide by reasonable standards of social responsibility and thereby causing harm to the Undercommons. This tort claims the carelessness of the University. On the other hand, to make this case against the university would place them in the very position of the “critical academic” from which they are drawing a line of escape. For to be “a critical academic in the university is to be against the university, and to be against the university is always to recognize it and be recognized by it, and to institute the negligence of that internal outside, that unassimilated underground, a negligence of it that is precisely, we must insist, the basis of the professions” ^[14]. Nonetheless, they take issue and attempt the case. And this case, is a charge that must ultimately be a negligent negligence case - an unfinished, incomplete, unsuccessful, unpassable case. It has everything to do with being bad lawyers, bad advocates - those who “refuse to refuse professionalization”, or by logical extension, those who “refuse to refuse” “negligence.” ^[15]

One thinks, interestingly, of all the *pro se* lawsuits filed by prisoners that ultimately were the reason for the passage of the Prison Litigation Reform Act. It wasn't that prisoners were filing bad lawsuits as a concerted political tactic, but that they were in good faith filing lawsuits that because of their unprofessional expertise produced pleadings that judges over and over again dismissed for “lack of legal merit.” That is, the elements of the pleading were not sufficiently met, or if we were to cast them in the language of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, they “failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted”. ^[16]

Still, as I discussed earlier, Moten and Harney are not trying to win a case of negligence against the university. They're just in it for the pleading, that perhaps at the end of the day, at the end of its writing, already reveals itself to be unfileable - and not because it “fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted,” but rather because there is something about (the) pleading that has always been infallible against legal dissection. Imagine a lawyer's practice of working with clients to write negligence claims, but never filing them? This is the opposite of the good civil rights lawyer Derrick Bell criticizes,

the lawyer who looks for and only works with the client who has a fileable case . ^[17] The bad lawyer is the one who works in order to work with the client, who lives for the *jouissance* of pleading in common - of *complaining*.

Indeed, “what then could be said for criminality?” ^[18] It is an idea of criminality that frees us from the vicissitudes of negligence. But only after we have disambiguated negligence and criminality, tort and crime, completely, until the disambiguation gives way to a certain irreducible criminal intellectuality (agid#design-against-presumptions) available in this undercommon ambivalence in law. Within criminal law there is a criminal negligence we charge as “manslaughter.” And within tort law there is “gross negligence” relieved by “punitive damages.” This is precisely the undercommon ambivalence we see in the adjudication of the possible cases against BART police officer, Johannes Mesherle, for the theft of Oscar Grant’s life from the world. When the jury came back with a guilty conviction for involuntary manslaughter in the criminal trial, Oscar Grant’s advocates mobilized a “wrongful death” case. ^[19] These two are not the only possible cases, and to be clear, I am not pointing to the fact of these different genres of cases as political opportunities to be exploited in and of themselves. The more important point is the leap from criminal to civil, following Moten and Harney’s leap from knowledge that prosecutes the state to a performative of making the case. This is a leap that descends into an undercommon heterogeneity of civil causes of action (nuisance, defamation, conversion, malpractice, product liability, false advertising, duress, battery, material breach, invasion of privacy, nonperformance, and many others), only to discover that one was already there, in the undercommon of law, by this *jouissance* of pleading. Here we come upon a gestural thought of the torque of a law beyond law, that is always at issue, in any case, in the many cases of abolition without condition.

References

- [1] Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, “The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses”, Social Text, Vol. 22, No. 2 Summer 2004.
- [2] Jacques Derrida, “The University Without Condition”, in Without Alibi (2002), 230.
- [3] Derrida, 230-237.
- [4] Derrida, 230.
- [5] Moten and Harney, 112.
- [6] Moten and Harney, 114, my emphasis.

[7] Moten and Harney, 114.

[8] Moten and Harney, 102-103.

[9] This is a command I am inferring, between Moten and Harney's animation of "waste" and Derrida's command "get irresponsible", as discussed by J. Hillis Miller in *For Derrida* (2009), 191-196. The important point here is the profoundly untranslatable definition of "get," which means: "have, become, and be, all three." Miller, quoting Derrida's *Of Spirit*, 193.

[10] This is found across the text, but is laid out in their third thesis, "Professionalization is the Privatization of the Social Individual through Negligence", Moten and Harney, 108.

[11] This pyramid structure, as I see it, is less an architectural monument to human civilization, and more a physical representation of the slave's prismatic, parallax view of American modern law.

[12] This is an important critique of Derrida's focus on international human rights law in his seven theses as the point of "problematization (which does not mean disqualification) of the powerful juridical performatives that have given shape to the modern history of this humanity of man." The examples of these juridical performatives he references is "the Declaration of the Rights of Man—and of woman" and the concept of "crime against humanity" (231). Their exemplarity obtains, for Derrida, from "these performative productions of law or right (rights of man, human rights, the concept of crime against humanity) where they always imply the promise and, with the promise, the conventionality of the 'as if'" (231). We must remark, however, that the "conventionality of the 'as if'" is most vibrantly staged as a matter of doctrine in the seedier quotidian scene of tort law and its assumptive priority of reasonableness.

[13] On differences between tort law and criminal law, see generally, Kenneth Simons, "The Tort/Crime Distinction: Legal Doctrine and Normative Perspectives," 17 *Widener Law Journal* 719 (2008); and "Dimensions of Negligence in Criminal and Tort Law," *Theoretical Inquiries in Law*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2002).

[14] Moten and Harney, 105.

[15] Moten and Harney, 106.

[16] Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, 12(b)(6).

[17] See generally, Derrick Bell, "Serving Two Masters: Integration Ideals and Client Interests in School Desegregation Litigation", *The Yale Law Journal* , Vol. 85, No. 4 (Mar., 1976) , pp. 470-516.

[18] Moten and Harney, 112.

[19] The criminal case is *People v. Mehserle*, No. 161260 (2010); and there have been several federal civil rights suits, which have ended in settlements. Recently, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals denied Mehserle qualified immunity from pending civil rights suits. See *Johnson et al., v. Bay Area Rapid Transit, et al.*, No. 11-16480 (2013).

Making Anyway: Education, Designing, Abolition

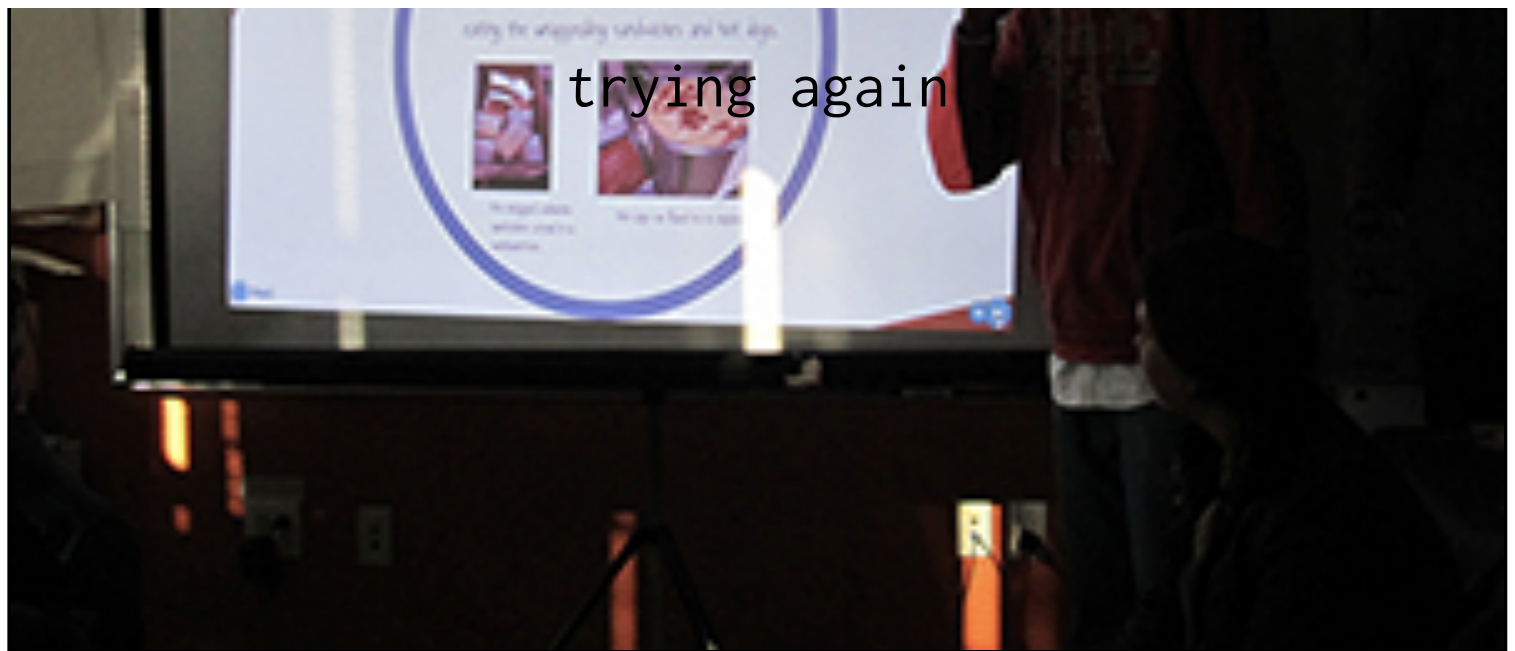
Shana Agid

The university where I work has a political legacy of which it is quite proud, its common sense wrangled for different purposes, from division to division of the university, contributing, or not, to the ethos and direction of the faculty, staff, and students. I doubt this is true of only my institution; while our legacy is particular it is not atypical. As faculty in the art and design school, which brings in - is expected to bring in - a large portion of the revenue to the university, I am keenly aware of the impacts of an academic shift taking place across design education, in particular, from an emphasis on industry-based professionalization and readiness to one on design as the new paradigm for liberal arts - a replacing of the critique mode of a traditional liberal arts education with the capacities for doing and making - for "problem solving" - inherent in the education and work of designers. (This doesn't, interestingly, undo the increased focus on job-readiness that is so much the focus of higher education now, however (harkins-meiners#universities-in-crisis).)

Designers, in a manner of speaking, are right now in the practice of asserting that they (we) are ready to find the answers to the kinds of "persistent social concerns" that have been the stuff of liberal arts educations, public policy programs, international humanitarianism, and even fine arts. This move is not entirely new in design - some graphic designers in the 1960s and 1970s articulated a sense of concern and purpose (<http://www.kengarland.co.uk/KG-published-writing/first-things-first/>) - social or political - for designing. Participatory Design grew out of the workplace democracy movement in Scandinavia in the 1970s, led by workers in fields where their jobs were quickly becoming integrated with a range of computer-based and other technologies. Designers aligned with this movement worked from the belief that people using these technologies should be "critically involved in their design" and made workers participants in the design of these new systems and machines.^[1] And what began as a smaller movement of designers of products and the built environment to address issues of sustainability and "human-centered design" had grown, or reemerged, by the early 2000s to begin to shape multiple fields of design (see, for example Margolin and Margolin, 2002). This has taken a range of forms, from discussions of materials use to social impacts of designed things, to, significantly, an increasingly ubiquitous focus on user-led design and co-design (<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ncdn20/current#.Uv-f2P205Pg>) (where designers work in some or all aspects of a design process alongside "non-designers").

Ours is now a *design-led university*. This term packages and codifies in our university identity (both in the philosophical sense and in the branded one) a kind of burgeoning confidence among designers, design education, and designing professions both to name and to take on "wicked problems." Coined in the 1960s by Horst Rittel, the idea of "wicked problems" was raised again as a means of naming the type of issues facing designers today by human-centered design advocate Richard Buchanan in 1992. It has persisted as a key framework in design knowing and processes. Buchanan described wicked problems as "a class of social system problems which are ill-formulated" and in which there are a range of people involved in both problem defining and decision-making, who themselves have a range of "conflicting values," and where both information used by designers and the "ramifications in the whole system" are confusing. ^[2] (I've written more extensively on this in relationship to what gets called "social design" or "social innovation" elsewhere. ^[3]

In deference to honesty and a kind of revealing that seems perhaps useful in order to not just fall into the practices (or arrangements) of criticism on which Moten and Harney work their theses, I should not go further in my argument without saying this: while I have perhaps a familiarly complex relationship to both design and liberal arts in the university and in the world, I also love them and the practice of them. Even as I understand the limits of both and the implications of my own role in the execution of teaching and learning in institutions (both brick and mortar and systemic) I can't shake the sense that learning (how) to think enables and even requires (ethically) a concomitant kind of learning how to make and do. In an admittedly romantic sense, I teach in part because I hope that this is what a liberal arts education and a design education might do - make it so we can, in fact, engage ourselves and students, but not only as students, in projects of making abolition and failing and trying again, producing loops that themselves produce possibilities for interruption and misdirection and reworking.



However.

Three years ago, give or take, as I was waiting for a meeting in my university I thumbed through the brochures advertising the possibilities afforded by the institution in which I work. I picked up a smart little brochure, pamphlet-sized, that announced in bold sans-serif type that prospective students should come to this school where they could "do good" and "do well."

As a part of this *Lateral* piece, this essay aims to raise some provocations and questions about the practice of attempting to teach abolition in universities and colleges that are embracing the notion of the duty of the university to the "community," and pursuing the deep institutionalization of "civic engagement" curricula and programs, all while offering the promise of an opportunity to "do good" (and do well - i.e., still get a job (harkins-meiners#universities-in-crisis)). It seems important to start with the obvious here: I learned (in college) of the feverish capacity of capital to make a profit-ready object of most any form of resistance, and it goes without saying that branding a degree whose selling point is what I'll call "do-good-ability" as a professional outcome that allows the graduate to pull down a good salary is, necessarily, of and deeply embedded in the systems in which students will engage to "make change." Add to this the entrepreneurial aspect of a number of these programs, as in "social entrepreneurship," (<http://www.echoinggreen.org>) and this interest on the part of the university seems to be poised on a teeter-totter between traditional and contemporary ideas of what purpose the university should serve (moral engagement on the one hand and job readiness on the other), with the teeter-totter being passed off as a leading edge where "good" and "well" meet. Importantly, this seems to require that no matter how much "change" is advocated and made through these educational engagements and job opportunities, for a degree or mode of engagement to remain viable by institutional standards, the conditions that tie "do-good-ability" to the capacity to "do well" not be made a significant part of the outcome. This is a good example, I'd argue, of a wicked problem.


At the same time, abolition as a political framework - especially prison-industrial complex (PIC) abolition, as articulated by Critical Resistance, a PIC abolitionist organization - is not a fixed end goal, rendered complete, for example, by decarceration or the opening of the prison gates. It presumes not only change over time, but proposes abolition as necessarily a process (<http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Ab-Toolkit-Part-6.pdf>) with a range of components, any one of which might be being pursued at any given time, in tandem with or separated from others, and with new strategies and tactics added as they are needed, theorized, or figured out. It is to the intersection, perhaps, of three points of argument made by my co-authors in this *Lateral* thread that I turn now: the limits to sovereignty Han argues may be embedded in Moten and Harney's proposition that "the object of abolition" is, in fact, "not the elimination of anything, but...the founding of a new society"; Harkins' and Meiners' proposal that education or college in prison (or education that takes into consideration the specter of imprisonment more broadly) might be a "leverage point" with the "potential to disrupt" ([harkins-meiners#frameworks-for-engagement](#)); and Stein's analysis of the university's roles in relation to the economics of job-production . What else might be made possible - or at least visible - in a consideration of teaching abolition in an educational system increasingly aiming to make synonyms of "doing good" and "doing well"?

Moten and Harney give us a difficult row to hoe, as it were. I am keenly aware of both the limitations of institutional critique and, alternatively, of those efforts by teachers and academics across US-based universities and colleges that are working to critically engage this institutionalization. This latter group, in which I end up including myself (<http://www.working-with-people.org>), tends to argue that the incorporation of civic engagement into university curricula requires a simultaneous commitment to challenging the power and place of the university and its relationships. And, while much of that work happens in centers and institutes, much of it happens after hours and on weekends and between committee meetings and through personal and political investments by people insisting on the need to make their own work meaningful. The intersection of Han's and Harkins' and Meiners' areas of engagement - "making" and "disrupting" - seems to open up the possibility of some aspect of this work, as it stands both inside and outside the university, being abolitionist anyway .

Still, it is critical to articulate what it actually means to name "doing good" as a graduate attribute. Because, as I hinted at above, "doing good" tends not to be rooted in an analysis that acknowledges that the systems through which, in spite of which, or around which one might "do good" are, in fact, doing things as they intend to - and producing exactly the outcomes they mean to produce. By skipping over, for example, the violence that is part and parcel of putting people in cages or putting cameras on the corner or enforcing borders of

all sorts, the graduate attribute "doing good" is inextricably tied to an obfuscation of the realities of the systems with which students are asked to engage, the very ones that produce the meaning of "doing well." (harkins-meiners#universities-in-crisis)

For example, abolitionists are not the only ones who consider that there is a problem presented by what is more typically called the "criminal justice system." With the rise in the role of design's and designer's interactions with systemic re-design, it is not at all surprising that (some) systems of punishment and confinement would begin to be discussed in these new "social" design terms and forums, in this era of complex problem solving. On the blog for the newly formed Public Policy Lab (<http://publicpolicylab.org>) in New York City, whose mission is to "help Americans build better lives by improving the design and delivery of public services," for instance, there are four projects (as of this date) gathered under the tag "Courts and Criminal Justice." (<http://publicpolicylab.org/tag/courts-criminal-justice/>)

 (<http://publicpolicylab.org/tag/courts-criminal-justice/>)

In one, "Designing a New Justice System," the Lab's blogger discusses how in Milliken, Colorado, "the need for a new police station provided an opportunity to redesign the service environment for the town's justice system." The police chief, Jim Burack, notes in an interview on which the post is based that "design has a big impact." The aim of the design of the complex - which includes the police station, courts, and social services - he explains, is to create a neighborhood-based police and court system that allows police to know residents and residents (alternately "customers," "defendants," "families," and "businesses") to feel like they understand what "happens there." And, as the author points out, the complex also "places heavy emphasis on inter-agency collaboration," presumably making for swifter and better designed responses to situations in which police and other services are involved.^[4]

On its face, this may seem a simple example: a police chief imagines that a better, more inviting police service complex will make residents more likely both to use it and to feel comfortable using it, and so employs design as a strategy for making such a space a central fixture of the town, located, as it is, across from the town square. And it is, perhaps, in this simplicity that the concern lies: at what point, if ever, does it become the role of the designer not to "improve" a system, but to question it, and even question the role of design in its reproduction? (When) does it become the role of a designer to design against the presumptions of the systems we may have set out to "improve?" How does that matter for the practice of building abolitionist possibilities?

What might it mean to make differently?

I want to turn back now to the university, to the example of a course I have taught for six years that is, on its face, not clearly abolitionist in its outcomes, but, I would argue, is a persistent attempt at teaching abolition. I believe that is this contradiction - or struggle - that makes it useful to the questions we, as co-authors in this *Lateral* piece, are knocking around. In brief: Over the past five years, I have worked (initially with a co-teacher, Lara Penin) with staff, clients, and students at The Fortune Society, a large non-profit that provides a range of services to formerly incarcerated people and people in an alternative to incarceration program, to consider the possibilities service design present there. The shape of the class has shifted over time. In the period between Fall 2010 and Fall 2012, it took on a more consistent form when, in 2010, a small group in my class began to focus in on using design to collaboratively define a range of needs and desires among students at Fortune, and in 2011, based on the ideas that began to emerge the year before, Fortune staff asked the class to build on this work to develop a service design that addressed the needs and desires of staff and clients to have a functional and well-used "community" space in a large open room on the second floor of their building in Long Island City. ^[5] The class focus remained on that space in 2012, and on the emerging clarity that food - access to food that specifically was not "like jail food" - was a sore spot in both the upstairs space (where the "jail food" was served) and in the capacity for building "community."

The course's key contexts are three-fold: it is a partner-based course in a university that privileges civic engagement and partnership with "community;" it is a design studio in a university that privileges design-led learning as both a route to "21st Century learning" and "doing good;" and, most importantly, it has generated and necessitated a complex intertwining of the teaching and learning goals of at least two teachers, several classes of students, and theories of both design and service provision in the totalizing context of prisons, policing, and punishment systems. In this course, we try also to contend with the political—the systemic nature of those aforementioned "wicked problems." This means thinking about how, through design practices and investigation, Parsons students and Fortune staff and students can adapt or refigure designing to explore conflicting and contradictory aspects of how ideas of 'need' are differentially defined by people in different political and experiential positions, with different relationships to power. In this way, the work done in the course attempts to ask what it might mean to use design processes as a means to highlight, question, refuse, or fight to change the very conditions in which the design work is taking place. And, what this means, is that we fail, often, in designing anything that really seems like the right thing, and try, instead, to make anyway .

I've written about this class before, at different stages in its lifecycle ([here](http://www.designstudiesforum.org/journal-articles/worldmaking-working-through-theorypractice-in-design/) (<http://www.designstudiesforum.org/journal-articles/worldmaking-working-through-theorypractice-in-design/>) and see citation below). Rather than describe specifics of the course further here, I am more interested in raising it as an experience - not only mine,

though mine is the only one from which I can reliably narrate - of designing into the open nothingness that is also somehow the *thingness*, the "there there," of unfinished work and unsolved problems, and teaching as a form or practice of un-learning, together with students and partners.*

At the start of the Fall 2012 class, I gave students a new set of restrictions: in order to increase our capacity for being accountable to our partner organization, the class was going to begin where the previous class left off, build on their research, and try to move forward to a more wholly considered and viable design proposal by the end of the semester. This meant that students in the 2012 class would be working with some of the assumptions and determinations of the 2011 class, and would also be responsible for interpreting them enough to present them to a new group of students at Fortune. It so happens that the 2011 group took like fish to water (some of them) to the idea of the context of the PIC as one that begged questions - why is it, some of them asked, that the system of imprisonment seemed to be self-perpetuating?; what would happen if we "got rid of prisons altogether?"; why did we believe that "our freedom comes at the cost of someone else's expense / imprisonment?" This appeared to be less true of the 2012 group, but members of this class excelled at engaging the ideas and articulated needs of Fortune co-design partners in their attempts to design and test a food service system that would, at least, be not-dehumanizing. The combination of these foci, accidental as they were, made for a strong set of questions and hunches that informed design proposals.

The 2012 semester ended with a design proposal presentation by both Parsons and Fortune students, whose findings and ideas were derived from the research from 2011 along with the 2012 classes' own research and the most complete prototype test we'd managed so far in the class, in which students and staff at Fortune and Parsons created a sandwich bar with a range of options for freshly made sandwiches (we're talking cold-cuts, lettuce, tomato, and onion and fresh fruit, provided by a grocery store stop on the way to work by a Fortune staff member, and cut and arranged on platters by Fortune and Parsons students who made up the actual system for delivery on the spot before some 40 people came through a long line for lunch). The presentation was attended for the first time by not only class participants, but Fortune staff responsible for managing food resources, including various "healthy eating" type initiatives. Also for the first time, there was a discussion afterwards, with questions posed both to and by these staff (who everyone in the room knew were the ones who held a kind of power to make certain changes, or not). One of the slides in the presentation, about which there was a fair amount of consternation regarding whether or not to include it, was a particularly unappealing image of a giant boiling pot of hot dogs with foam burbling all around them, taken by a Fortune student in the prep kitchen during one of our classes, which happen to fall on "hot dog Thursdays." When a Fortune student presented the slide and talked about food and connotations of respect and care and opportunities, it was undoubtedly different than if a Parsons student had done the same - the weight of the image and Fortune

students' words were not so much an articulation of a badly designed system that needed to be replaced by a better designed one, but a demand, in a certain sense, for a shift in institutional priorities.

Over these two years, the more information there was, in the form of data from a collectively designed survey and responses to design-led prompts and things gleaned from observations and conversations in both sites and with both sets of participants, the *harder* it became to propose, much less make, a designed service that appeared to meet the needs and ideas and desires expressed. We were dealing, unquestionably, with systems much bigger than us, and our interventions - as they were honed and made "designable" - became abstractions of the larger problems students in both institutions uncovered, even as they became increasingly satisfying and exciting as they became more complete.

Thus, even as we ended the 2012 class with the most finished, realizable design proposal derived from something most approximating a co-design process in my experience teaching the class (meaning we actually worked more in tandem with the students at Fortune to both identify questions and possible design ideas than in prior years), it was already evident - to me, at least - that the leverage point was not so much the strong proposal for a hot lunch system (even though it was a good proposal), but the demand for visibility and voice, if not self-determination, of which it was just one viable, designable, manifestation inside the larger controlled and contained form of one service organization in the constellation of the PIC. It is the problem of this essay, and this suite of essays, that the latter - self-determination - is so much harder to render, not to mention to design.

Instead, I wonder if this work points to a different role for design, or for the act of making as a form of rethinking, and what this means for design education and the design-led university that is one troubling object at the center of this essay. There is a concept in design of the "fuzzy front end," in which a design process is illustrated to start out a royal mess of bits and pieces that, through an even messier process, eventually wind up smoothed out and concluded in "the design." Similarly, we often describe what might appear from the outside to be a linear process of research, development, testing, and iteration, as actually a messy series of double- and triple-circuits of investigation and making and investigating again. In other words, mess is increasingly a presumed piece of any design process. But the presumption, eventually, is that in any given case study, the mess ends, even provisionally in the case of wicked problems, in a something - if not a solution, an intervention. What if, in the case of designing abolition, it doesn't, it can't? What if this messy but eventually closed circuit is, instead, wrenched open? If the thing that produces "change" is in the process, the process that leads us to not an end of something, or only the opposition of something, but the making of something entirely new, as Moten and Harney propose?

It was not planned, but also does not seem entirely accidental, that my co-authors and I have ended up using some kind of physics to describe the problems or questions around which our pieces of this larger thread circle. Sora Han talks about torque , Gillian Harkins and Erica Mieners about leverage , David Stein discusses commoning - a relation of people to spaces, resources, and meanings, and I am zeroing in on something *wrenched open*. And so this presents one more set of questions: what is it about the attempt, as an actor, to navigate not only opposing, but *making* as the response to that opposition, that throws us into motion, into relationships not of theoretical power, but of metaphors of relational force? Is it possible that trying to make something forces us into a different relationship to the meanings that surround the context of the making process or the made thing? Does making anyway allow us to push - using torque, leverage, wrenching - into different possibilities in contested space?

"Do good and do well" is the promise of a closed circuit, meanings and outcomes that are - no matter how mobile in the everyday shifts and changes of any learning or working context - fixed and knowable. It is marketable precisely because it can be made visible, because it is a closed loop on which knowledge becomes a product for use in the job market and the market for higher education. Do-good-ability is, in this sense, an evidence-based end game, perhaps well-suited for the new paradigms of universities (harkins-mieners#universities-in-crisis) and, even, new and shifting contexts of prisons, policing and surveillance (harkins-mieners#prisons-in-crisis). What happens to the liberal university's promise to prospective students that they can do good and do well, when the work of "solving" social "problems" alone cannot help but produce changes (projects, things, even ideas) that are always already adapted to political contexts as if they are fixed and unchanging at best, or inevitable at worst?

For the past several years, Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) has been building a boycott on participation in the design and construction of prisons. What began as the Prison Design Boycott in 2004, is now called the Prison Alternatives Initiative (http://www.adpsr.org/home/prison_alternatives_initiative), and the initial campaign has grown to include not only organizing a boycott, but the work of one member, Raphael Sperry, using design processes to reimagine and redesign former prison sites (and prisons that are proposed for closure) for other uses, and the use of their website to offer statistics and alternative visions to those designers they seek to engage. This work is framed, as the new name of the campaign suggests, in what I would characterize as political terms: design articulating a use value in refusing to participate in prison construction so that other needs might be articulated and met (e.g., decarceration or an increase in the construction of community centers). The example from the Policy x Design Blog of the Public Policy Lab above takes certain existing conditions for granted (the utility of a police-centered public service space near the town square) while challenging or seeking to change others (the design of the building and service areas so they seem open and conducive to service-provision). In

contrast, the example of ADPSR takes as a starting place a question about being an architect, designer, or planner in a country with the highest incarceration rate in the world, and tries to reimagine not the prison, but the role of design, in the face of it.

While the ADPSR campaign is not abolitionist, and stops far short of envisioning the role of designers in making a society without prisons or the PIC, it is, I think, a useful example of how a shift in the understanding of a system – from inevitable to contingent, from individualized to systemic – can impact the idea of what design can or should do. ADPSR's members began by organizing a collective act of refusal, what we might in the terms of this essay consider an active practice of *un-learning*, and what could perhaps be an example of *wrenching open*; in their refusal to participate they also insisted upon an interruption of well-established roles and relationships that materially create one part of the PIC. By organizing for unfinished (or un-started) prisons, in both literal and metaphorical terms, the boycott, perhaps in ways reminiscent of the unfinished (or insufficient) interventions made by my class, proposes a different role for design. The metamorphosis of the boycott – the refusal – into a larger political campaign to make something different, speaks to the rest, to the role of making as a means for proposing otherwise. I do not think that I can, finally, make a clean knot of the problem, on the one hand, of the institutionalization of civic engagement and the promise of "do-good-ability" and, on the other, of the possibilities afforded by an approach to teaching that foregrounds practices of unlearning, wrenched-open circuits, and an imagination for abolition. And, it seems out of synch with the organizing ideas of this group of essays to end simply on critique of university practices. So, I want to use this small, specific example of ADPSR's campaign as a means of proposing that we continue to make anyway, that making anyway is abolitionist practice in necessarily imperfect conditions.

*Thanks to my co-author in this larger *Lateral* piece, Erica Meiners, for this important insight on this point – that we might also be re-imagining how to say what "teaching" is, by characterizing teaching as "cultivating practices of unlearning," as opposed to investing in individualized "enlightenment, additive, progress" models.

Notes

[1] Robertson, Toni and Jesper Simonsen, "Participatory Design: and Introduction," in Jesper Simonsen, ed. *Routledge Handbook of Participatory Design*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012. p. 2

[2] Buchanan, Richard. "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking." *Design Issues* 8, no. 2 (1992). p. 15.

[3] Agid, Shana. "'How can we design something to transition people from a system that doesn't want to let them go?': Social Design and its Political Contexts." *Design Philosophy Papers*, "Beyond 'Progressive Design'" 3 (December 2011).

[4] Erin Routson, "Designing a New Justice System," Policy x Design Blog, Public Policy Lab, <http://publicpolicylab.org/2012/04/designing-a-new-justice-system/> (<http://publicpolicylab.org/2012/04/designing-a-new-justice-system/>), accessed September 1 2013.

[5] This partnership is still active, and the class also ran in Fall 2013, but in an expanded project that now also includes a New York City public high school, and Working with People, the curriculum project on which I work. A food program roughly based on the one we prototype tested and designed is now running, serving people at Fortune breakfast and dinner five days a week, and the space on the 2nd floor we were asked to think about is now entirely redesigned. The extent to which the current changes are or are not directly linked to, or derived from, the work of our partnership is both not entirely known and a matter of opinion. It may be that what we *made* – concrete service design proposals aside – was the capacity for capacity, or the possibility for possibilities, with respect to the assessment of needs and priorities in a complex, layered community.

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Full Employment for the Future

David Stein

“School is not preparation for life—it is life, and it ought to be democracy.” – Bayard Rustin^[1]

Sora Han asks us to consider the role of lawsuits brought by imprisoned people that “lacked legal merit” and enabled the Prison Litigation Reform Act because they “failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.” Adjudications of those deserving of relief and their merit haunt the U.S. political life marked by histories of racist patriarchy. ^[2] Such questions rely on ideological norms of calculation and assessment. *Who deserves what types of entitlements? On what grounds?* In this moment of rampant and structural joblessness, there is an increasing critique of universities for their failure to create appropriate routes to employment for their graduates who are borrowing increasing sums of money to attend. Do these good students, who make, what President Obama has dubbed “good choices,” (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/08/23/transcript-obamas-remarks-on-college-affordability-plan>) deserve jobs? ^[3] If so, why only them? Or, with the extreme wealth of the U.S., should these good students, along with the bad, and everyone else, be entitled to a job or income? And what do employment rates for undergraduates have to do with the university anyway?

Writing in a German daily newspaper in 1848, Marx confronted such questions by arguing that ruling regimes consistently attempt to mystify their modes of dominance in the “unpretentious term: *production costs*.” Such costs, he argued, “are defrayed for the state by taxes and the taxes are raised by the *work of the nation*. Thus in an *economic* sense it remains an enigma how any king can give anything to a nation... In all cases, the king can only give what is given to him. That is the position in an *economic sense*. It so happens, however, that *constitutional* kings arise exactly at those moments when people find the clue to this *economic secret*.” ^[4] Part of building the undercommons of the university is first to acknowledge this “economic secret”: we, workers, make the university, on both sides of finance and production. Universities—public, private, and even for-profit ones like the University of Phoenix—are reliant on the work of government and thus the social wealth we produce. ^[5] And secondly, an abundant challenge before us is to proliferate freedom practices within our workplaces and beyond. The university is one site for these actions, but, as Fred

Moten and Stefano Harney have recently suggested, it doesn't have any necessary relationship to the university. Rather the university happens to be their work place, and the location where they practice the urgent task of commoning. ^[6] Commoning, in this sense, is the practice against enclosure: the insistent struggle for means of subsistence and survival, plentitude and freedom. ^[7] For example, when formerly enslaved laundry workers in Atlanta clipped books onto their clotheslines to teach each other to read, while they "stole" time from their employer, they engaged in such practices. ^[8] Commoning is the act of making the commons and the relations that undergird the places called "the commons." Attention to how commoning practices were criminalized is what first directed Marx's attention to the study of economics. ^[9] Likewise, practices of commoning also hold answers for anti-criminalization struggles.

Though reliant on the economic secret of taxation, many have recently argued against universities as commons, and instead maintained that colleges and universities are merely useful or "productive" ^[10] for what they provide capital, whether as a coercive apparatus of a "mental discipline factory," ^[11] or a place for capital to externalize the costs of training workers in the skills needed for jobs in the market. ^[12] But if one believes either of these types of utilitarian arguments for education—the latter more bourgeois than the former—then the cause of the crisis of daily subsistence and unemployment (which is a relatively recent phenomena for unemployed and under-employed college graduates whose skills and geography will not translate into jobs) then it is the universities that are seen as having failed to do their proper training; ^[13] or worse, it is the students failing to appropriately assess which professions were in need of workers and choose an agenda of study accordingly; or the problem is the students own lack of bravery to take sufficient risk, as Bain Capital's former managing director Edward Conard argued. ^[14] Or perhaps, as President Obama has suggested, students lack the adequate metrics to evaluate "how well do...graduates [of a particular university] do in the workforce."

(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/08/23/transcript-obamas-remarks-on-college-affordability-plan/>) ^[15]

Such sentiments (<http://jacobinmag.com/2013/08/whats-the-matter-with-indiana/>)—that suggest the universities 'lack the merit' (in terms of job training and necessary science, technology, engineering, math [STEM] emphasis) that would entitle them to adequate public funding—utilize inappropriate analyses, and instead a macroeconomic perspective is necessary to understand the role of unemployment in the contemporary political economy. ^[16] Capital will not provide the necessary jobs for the current number of people, college graduates or not, unless it sees appropriate rates of profit in such an expenditure. As David Broderick, C.E.O. of U.S. Steel put it "U.S. Steel is in business to make profits, not to make steel." ^[17] Or as the founder of the Apollo Group, the parent company of the University of Phoenix put it: "This is a corporation...Coming here is not a rite of passage. We're not trying to develop [students] or go in for that 'expand their minds' bullshit." ^[18] From the perspective

of capital, use value means little; exchange value dominates; and high rates of unemployment are essential to maintaining working-class discipline and depressed wages. ^[19] And as a result, for over fifty-five years, the Federal Reserve has worked arduously in order to ensure that the rate of inflation remains low, with the most marginalized workers bearing the weight of such policy choices that emphasize containing inflation over guaranteed jobs. ^[20] Viewed from the perspective of the postwar Federal Reserve, few jobs are more important than the one played by unemployed people—helping to contain the inflation rate. ^[21] These problems are not technical ones that can be solved with better evaluative metrics for universities; rather, they are *political* problems.

For colleges and universities to play their part in creating good jobs, one crucial thing should be the teaching of courses in the history of domestic workers. President Obama says he plans to “encourage more colleges to embrace innovative new ways to prepare our students for a 21st century economy.” (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/08/23/transcript-obamas-remarks-on-college-affordability-plan/>) ^[22] Since the Bureau of Labor Statistics has predicted that the “health and social assistance sector” will be responsible for the bulk of the job growth through 2020, it seems important that these jobs should provide living wages and adequate benefits that all workers deserve. ^[23] But domestic workers still struggle with gaining legal rights to organize unions to fight for such benefits. (<http://www.domesticworkersunited.org/index.php/en/pressroom/dwu-in-the-news/item/112-domestic-workers-bill-killed-in-california-by-jerry-brown-veto>) ^[24] Like the problems of unemployment generally, this situation is not a result of personal failings of these workers or their supposed lack of “skills”; rather, the history of domestic workers show that their exclusion from the Fair Labor Standards Act had everything to do with racist and patriarchal Jim Crow political power in Congress. In 1938, the authoritarian experience of Jim Crow life ensured that only 4% of Black people could vote for the politicians who shaped the FLSA. ^[25] This Jim Crow exclusion lives on with the continued marginalization of care workers from legal protections. ^[26] And since such issues arose in the political sphere, they should be resolved in it. So, for colleges and universities to do their part in creating “good jobs” in the most rapidly growing area of the economy, they should teach this history and actively mobilize their constituencies on behalf of organizations like Domestic Workers United (<http://www.domesticworkersunited.org/index.php/en/>).

From this analysis, we can see that the problem of wagelessness is centrally a political one, and that people who are without wages are central to the macroeconomic relations. As Marx suggested, “wages are...regulated by the expansion and contraction of the industrial reserve army.” ^[27] But how was this group of wageless people created? And how could it have been otherwise? In the post-World War II era, the increasing automation of production, enabled by investments in constant capital and machinery (along with relatively inexpensive energy), pushed many people out of jobs and created conditions of labor surpluses—what Marx called the production of the “relative surplus population” or “the industrial reserve army.” ^[28]

While in recent history, college graduates have not been the ones who are redundant to capital as waged laborers, the great recession of the neoliberal era has changed this; people with a BA recently had unemployment and underemployment rates in the range of 4% and 8% respectively. ^[29] The leading scholars of the rise of the prison industrial complex in the post-1960s moment such as Tony Platt and Ruth Wilson Gilmore suggest that the formal and informal control of this group of people is a chief responsibility of the police-prison relation. ^[30] Perhaps then negating the production this surplus population can be an important grounding upon which abolitionist-reforms can be achieved.

This assessment of how wageness is produced and its centrality to political economy shows that the rhetoric deployed to legitimize budget cuts to universities and humanities education is disingenuous and diversionary. The production of surplus populations is crucial to the maintenance of a “healthy” economy with low rates of inflation and high rates of GDP. So, the critique of humanities education for inadequacies of job preparation misses the mark. Rather, historical analysis of the production of wagelessness, and those who attempted to alleviate such plagues, are better situated to understand how to address such crucial problems today. From this standpoint, we can make a powerful and uncompromising defense of Moten and Harney’s invocations to *study*. And in this sense, such studying is one difficult step from becoming an economic rejuvenation plan that could enable meaningful social reforms on a host of scales: *wages for students*.

Starting at least with Reconstruction, the fight for a governmental guarantee to a job or income has a long legacy in Black freedom struggles. ^[31] Few pursued such efforts with the fervor of Bayard Rustin, the great civil rights and socialist organizer most well known for his role coordinating the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The March, which grew out of the organizing of the Negro American Labor Council, pushed for the full employment as its central demand. After the failure to achieve this as a victory for the March, Rustin continued to pursue such goals. But he also knew that since increased productive capacity was the problem creating conditions of wagelessness, the solution required a new way of envisioning waged work. In 1964 he explained that:

“we have to redefine what work is now... we must recognize that the work of the young people is to develop their minds and skills for the benefit of society. There is no more sacred work. Therefore, I think that high school and college students who could not afford it should have not only their books paid for and their tuition paid—if necessary, get a salary in order to make it possible for them to consider their work school...as the machines take over various areas [of work and] the private sector of the economy is not capable of keeping people at work with dignity, then the public sector must come in and play a larger role.”

(<http://whospeaks.library.vanderbilt.edu/interview/bayard-rustin>) ^[32]

Such an analysis was prescient fifty years ago and remains so today. Indeed, it holds solutions to a number of critical problems confronting U.S. society.

Rustin wasn't the only person to focus on this as a solution to problems of unemployment. In 1975, a group of New England students published a pamphlet called, "Wages for Students" which utilized a feminist Marxist analysis to argue for the importance of the work of those without wages for capital. (<http://zerowork.org/WagesForStudents.html>) This group criticized the notion that school is a "good investment" and that students should view themselves as a "little corporation." "Going to school, being a student is work," they explained. "This work is called schoolwork although it is not usually considered to really be work since we don't receive any wages for doing it. This does not mean that schoolwork is not work, but rather that they have taught us to believe that only if you are paid do you really work." ^[33] Their analysis, formed through the crucible of the oil shocks and the destruction of the New Deal order, suggests a need for a return to full employment planning as a route to decouple jobs and education.

While the demand for a governmental guarantee to a job or income has been supported recently by everyone from the short-lived Occupy Wall Street Demands Working Group (<http://lbo-news.com/2011/10/20/ows-demands-working-group-jobs-for-all/>) to Bruce Springsteen (<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/bruce-springsteens-state-of-the-union-20120329>), and persistently in the pages of Jacobin Magazine (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/02/work-it/>), it will certainly take many strong movements on multiple fronts for it to become the dominant moral value that it was from the 1940s-70s. ^[34] Some might suggest that this demand is a further integration into the capitalist wage relation; but as the theorists of wageless expropriation of value show, the unwaged work in homes and elsewhere is already integrated in to capitalist social relations. ^[35] From this vantage point, to demand a wage for such work is to compel capital to internalize costs it has historically externalized.

But the demand for full employment should not be imposed on our present in an undialectical way. The extent to which full employment planning is the poetry of the past or the future is *determined* by how seriously one understands the problems of unwaged caring labor and environmental justice struggles (since behind every automated production line is the energy—and often fossil fuels—that power it). ^[36] Full employment for the future is not about achieving higher rates of GDP or producing more widgets than any dumpster can hold. Rather, full employment for the future would plan for lower retirement ages, shorter work weeks, and socially useful and urgent labor such as elder care, childcare, teaching, education, conservation. It would confront centrally, the problem Harvey Swados identified in 1957, "the problem of work." ^[37]

Indeed such ideas are historical as well and won't need to be invented without previous precedent. There were a number of thinkers and activists within full employment movements who explored such concepts. Economists Leon and Mary Dublin Keyserling called for public jobs for conservation and creating new modes of electricity in the 1940s. ^[38] A. Philip Randolph argued in front of the Los Angeles Central Labor Council in 1958 that as a response to automation, organized labor must "move vigorously for the establishment of the 4 hour day and 5 day week, social security coverage of domestic and agricultural workers and a minimum wage consistent with decency, comfort and health, education and recreation for all American families." ^[39] In the early 1960s people in eastern Kentucky formed the Appalachian Committee for Full Employment (http://nunncenter.org/OHMS-Viewer/viewer.php?cache=19910H025_App297_Maggard_not_indexed.xml) as a response to widespread poverty and unemployment created by the recent downturn in the coal industry, combined with increased mechanization of mining. They struggled intensely against mine operators, politicians, the police, and the leadership of the United Mine Workers while pursuing governmental guarantees to a job or income. ^[40] Their plan for full employment included the creation of medical clinics, a special education center for children who needed supplemental attention and for adult education, day care centers, and rebuilding homes with adequate plumbing and sewers. ^[41] In the 1970s and 80s, Coretta Scott King led the Full Employment Action Council (FEAC) as they pushed for things like solar paneling and weatherizing buildings to be part of a full employment strategy. ^[42] FEAC worked with local groups like the Massachusetts Coalition for Full Employment to organize a solar-heating and weatherizing "work-in" with building trades officials to show what types work needed doing, and they began plans to coordinate with the Clamshell Alliance and Science for the People to show how full employment could be utilized for new energy sources. ^[43] As King presciently argued, "full employment requires a major improvement in our educational system...it requires...major investment[s] in mass transit, [and] in energy." ^[44]

Struggles for full employment are by no means revolutionary per se, nor should they be confused as such, but they are indissolubly tied to social reform and revolution in the way Rosa Luxemburg explored. ^[45] Full employment serves to negate certain violences of proletarianization, and in that sense it enables greater proliferation of revolutionary strategy, but not in and of itself. Rather out of a new dialectical synthesis people emerge in a greater position of power; they become less desperate, less tied to a particular wage, less under the thumb of their sexist shift manager, and so forth. Then the question becomes, what new contradictions must be struggled over.

And what of government? How does such thinking compel us to consider what role governmental activity plays in the struggle to enlarge one governmental sector—public education—and eradicate another—the prison industrial complex? This is the tension of struggle around "the state." As Moten and Harney suggest, "not only is [the state] not a monolith but it's very, very thoroughly aerated. There are all kinds of little holes and tunnels and ditches and

highways and byways through the state that are being produced and maintained constantly by the people who are also at the same time doing this labor that ends in the production of the state. So, what is it that these folks are producing?" ^[46] And what happens when the public education and the relations of imprisonment are not isolated or directly opposed? What occurs when they bump up against each other? These are urgent questions that must be negotiated in actual political and social struggles with commoning practices helping to guide the way.

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14. For an example of this view, see: Edward Conard as rendered by Adam Davidson in his profile in *The New York Times*: "A central problem with the U.S. economy, he [Conard] told me [Davidson], is finding a way to get more people to look for solutions despite these terrible odds of success. Conard's solution is simple. Society benefits if the successful risk takers get a lot of money. For proof, he looks to the market. At a nearby table we saw three young people with plaid shirts and floppy hair. For all we know, they may have been plotting the next generation's Twitter, but Conard felt sure they were merely lounging on the sidelines. 'What are they doing, sitting here, having a coffee at 2:30?' he asked. 'I'm sure those guys are college-educated.' Conard, who occasionally flashed a mean streak during our talks, started calling the group 'art-history majors,' his derisive term for pretty much anyone who was lucky enough to be born with the talent and opportunity to join the risk-taking, innovation-hunting mechanism but who chose instead a less competitive life." Davidson, Adam. "Romney's Former Bain Partner Makes a Case for Inequality." *The New York Times*, May 1, 2012.
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Beyond Crisis: College in Prison through the Abolition Undercommons

Gillian Harkins and Erica R. Meiners

Our aim in this *Lateral* thread is to consider opportunities for new ways to engage abolition in relation to college in prison programs.

This thread explores inter-relationships among institutions of higher education and prisons. We focus in particular on teaching and learning – the hallmarks of college in prison programs – as they relate to research and administration within and across universities/colleges and prisons. Our aim is to contribute to broader structural thinking about how we can work in college in prison programs most ethically and in ways that contribute to prison abolition within and across campus and prison settings.

We draw inspiration from Harney and Moten's *The University and the Undercommons (Seven Theses)* (2004). In this thread we provide not just critique (although we do that) but also meditations on possible alignments with fugitive enlightenment and the abolition undercommons, even though neither contemporary college in prison programs nor critical carceral studies scholarship demonstrate or exemplify this commitment in any automatic way.

This piece is organized in six short sections that readers can access in any order:

[What is at Stake?](#)

[Language of the Abolition Undercommons](#)

[Labor in the Abolition Undercommons](#)

[Universities in Crisis](#)

[Prisons in Crisis](#)

[College in Prisons](#)

[Frameworks for Engagement](#)

Inside each section are links to all the others, enabling readers to navigate the ideas as they unfold from any entry point.

Each section is meant to be free-standing, yet also networked. This organization is meant to disrupt knowledge acquisition as it accrues within the specific logics and vocabularies of individual institutions. We thought this was the best way to reflect how meaning-making participates in the vernaculars of specific institutions while also translating and code-switching across them.

What is at Stake?

Across the United States increasing numbers of universities and colleges, primarily restrictive enrollment public and private institutions, are offering post secondary educational programs for students currently locked inside prisons. A much smaller group of universities and colleges are building pipelines to provide access to post secondary education for students who were previously inside prisons (see for example John Jay College of Criminal Justice Prison-to-College Pipeline (<http://johnjayresearch.org/pri/projects/nys-prison-to-college-pipeline/>)). The backdrop for these initiatives includes public narratives about a “crisis” in both higher education and prison systems in the United States. Escalating tuition rates, unchecked student debt, diminishing status for degrees, short-term skill training replacing long-term human development, the disappearance of the full time tenure track faculty member – all are invoked to demonstrate the crisis in higher education. Wide-spread hunger strikes in California and Georgia prisons in 2012 and 2013, legislators increasingly reluctant to allocate shrinking state revenues toward corrections, mainstream media coverage of inhumane conditions including overcrowding, racial segregation, inadequate mental health care, and sexual assault – these are invoked to demonstrate the crisis in prisons. The purpose and promise of higher education degrees and of our prison nation are both allegedly in crisis, yet educational programs inside prisons draw increased attention.

As faculty members invested in prison abolition in different states and disciplinary locations, we have participated in developing and implementing programs related to “college in prison.” (See definitions of abolition and prison industrial complex (<http://criticalresistance.org/about/not-so-common-language/>)). Yet we are often dissatisfied and at times dismayed by the prevailing frameworks used to rationalize and navigate this work. Generally, public rationales for college in prison programs affirm: a) that higher education teaches human values and workplace skills; and b) that prisons warehouse people who have not yet accessed these values and skills. According to this rationale, universities/colleges providing incarcerated people with access to these values and skills serve the public good by increasing post-release access to secure employment and social rehabilitation and decreasing rates of recidivism and threats to public safety. This framework affirms the allegedly waning value of higher education as a response to the allegedly waning value of prisons: college in prison programs transform prison institutional spaces, criticized for their disciplinary and violent modes of dehumanization, into spaces of higher education offering *ethical and aesthetic values, socially sanctioned humanization, and cognitive or intellectual uplift/reform*. They provide improved conditions inside prisons and improved preparation for life after release from prisons, a combination of increasing interest to private foundations and philanthropists also involved in the restructuring of higher education (<http://education.msu.edu/irtl/pdf/Trends%20in%20National%20Foundation%20Funding%20for%20Education%202013.pdf>).

College in Prison programs also increase the value of higher education for those studying and working on main campuses. Universities/colleges provide value-added for students matriculated on the main campus when they create opportunities to visit or learn alongside incarcerated students. The educational goods provided reinforce the value accrued to higher education when it interfaces with prison systems: it offers a “humanizing” and educational encounter between people of presumably different life experiences (akin to diversity-based service learning or study abroad programs) and/or it increases skill-sets or provides “field” experiences for those seeking employment in fields such as criminology or social work (akin to unpaid internships or research assistantships). For teachers and administrators employed on University or college campuses, prison-based education is increasingly popular as service or volunteerism. Yet teachers in these programs are often disconnected from program design and administration, despite the fact their reason for

teaching inside may be motivated by commitments to prison abolition or social justice. In addition, incarcerated participants in these programs may only be involved as students, and their families/communities of origin may have no relationship to the educational program, inside or outside the prison.

The framework outlined above does offer many opportunities for abolitionist engagement. For students who participate in college in prison programs, there are potential abolitionist outcomes not dissimilar to any learning context: leadership development, skill acquisition, intellectual community, collective mobilization, intellectual autonomy, etc. For teachers who participate in college in prison programs, there are also potential outcomes that facilitate abolitionist politicization: crossing the walls separating incarcerated from “free world” populations, redistributing resources and benefits for which college personnel are “gatekeepers,” and displacing the college campus as the center of intellectual, cultural and social capital while reinventing the public function of higher education institutions as meaningful sites of learning. Yet for staff and administrators of these programs, there are more mixed political opportunities. The Department of Corrections constrains and shapes the official program goals and controls who has access to the classes; funder expectations must be met or assuaged; the sponsoring university or college may want to frame and narrate the program through their lens (often a charitable form of public service); and the list goes on. While we recognize the value of abolitionist outcomes for individual participants, we are also interested in how an abolitionist lens can re-map the current “crisis” in post secondary education *and* prisons and create potential sites of collective engagement, organizing, and analysis. Moving beyond individualized aims, we are interested in making different structural connections amongst these institutions and exploring how the re-emergence of higher education programs inside prisons participates in changing institutional relationships.

Coming from queer, feminist, anti-racist and economic justice backgrounds, we have both been struck by the hetero-gendered, economic and racial dynamics of volunteerism in most U.S. prison education programs. This phenomena has certainly been noted in other arenas of non-profit development and the governmentalization of social justice efforts. As the *Revolution Will Not Be Funded* (2009) volume has summarized, the NGOization of radical politics not only reduced the practical and imaginative goals of social justice organizing, it also reduced the population perceived as legitimate professionals capable (and available) to lead this work. The rise in white middle-class “ladies bountiful” certainly echoes earlier historical moments of domestic and moral uplift, and the specific economic and political reforms understood as “neoliberalism” have substantively shifted the significance and techniques through which such white ladies have and share bounty. White supremacy, rigid gender policing, and compulsory heteronormativity within prisons (and in Universities) function as effective filters to regulate who can imagine working with these programs, and who can feasibly negotiate the bureaucratic and structural hoops to gain admittance. Anecdotal evidence confirms that volunteers undergo differential treatment on the basis of race and gender, particularly during interactions with the officers who control entrance into or movement within the prison. Volunteers teaching in prison education programs extend the work of the University for low or no cost (han).

We use Fred Moten and Steven Harney’s “The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses” (2004) to help us understand the problems that arise when colleges and universities become more actively involved in providing access to higher education for people currently inside prisons, rather than for those living on the outside before or after incarceration. The Abolition Undercommons framework allows us to bring together questions of labor and justice across institutional spaces. To be clear: both authors are committed to providing access to higher education for people who are currently incarcerated. The abolition outcomes listed above justify this practice on structural grounds, but beyond that both *Lateral* authors feel education should be available to all. Individuals deserve quality education with no strings attached, and individuals who are currently incarcerated are no exception. That this is not the case in our society today is part of the problem we face

here, and the “Abolition Undercommons” provides one vocabulary through which to consider how higher education programs inside prisons successfully address one part of the problem and how they might more successfully develop partnerships to address others.

Abolition Undercommons Language

It is hard to engage Moten and Harney’s “The University and the Undercommons” without seeming to fall into the trap of “professionalization” they lament. In their “Seven Theses,” they point out that professional academic writing often privileges “critique” as its mode of engagement. Academic writers strike poses of critical detachment to further an argument, often summoning the ghost of Kant even as they depart from Kantian judgment to insist upon a radical critique of humanism tout court. They call this posturing “Enlightenment-type critique.” According to Moten and Harney, this type of critique participates in deadening intellectual labor that is easily expropriated to the University. This is the problem of “professionalization”: it takes intellectual engagement and transforms it into protocols of critique that reinforce the political, economic, social and cultural systems of the University. The rise of “critical university studies,” which has tried to direct scholarly attention to the problems of the political, economic, social and cultural systems of the University, ends up paradoxically reinforcing the system it critiques. People employed by the University use critique to distance themselves from the University, publishing professional scholarship that in turn bolsters the legitimacy of the University by making good on its “negligence (han),” making its negligence back into its profit, its surplus, its value-added. As Moten and Harney put it, “Would it not mean that to be critical of the university would make one the professional par excellence, more negligent than any other? To distance oneself professionally through critique, is this not the most active consent to privatize the social individual?”

Moten and Harney do not make an argument but instead offer Seven Theses, in keeping with genres of more contrapuntal meditation. Ultimately they favor what they call a “fugitive enlightenment” that denies and takes back the terms of enlightenment critique. What “negligent” professional scholars see as “a passionate example full of prophecy not proof, a bad example of a weak argument making no attempt to defend itself, given over to some kind of sacrifice of the professional community emanating from the Undercommons” is rather another mode of address. Another mode of address, but not entirely. Another mode that returns to that which defined it as an other, one that loves “the criminal, matricidal, queer, in the cistern, on the stroll of the stolen life, the life stolen by enlightenment and stolen back, where the commons give refuge, where the refuge gives commons.” In place of anti-humanism as critique (which the undercommons do not recognize, yet “know it is not love”), Moten and Harney call for something that remains un-named but which goes by the many names of enlightenment and its fugitives.

The first problem in responding to Moten and Harney’s call comes at the moment one sits down to write an essay for an academic journal. Professional academic prose requires subject-verb agreement and specific protocols of reasoning. The copula and its rationalities are both restrictive and necessary if one wants to persuade people within one discourse community—the academy—about the necessity of listening to and engaging with another—here people involved in higher education programs inside prisons, who may or may not be “academics” depending on how that term is defined. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that these “groups” may not share the same languages or reference systems even within their shared discourse, or may overlap institutionally and yet have different relationships to institutional discourses and spaces depending on their audiences at any given moment. Here we engage “abolition undercommons” as it is offered by Moten and Harney, as a call and a practice articulated in the vocabularies of the professional humanities (and some

social sciences) as well as of fugitive enlightenments. That some vocabularies of the professional humanities are also those of the fugitive enlightenment is of great interest here, as is the fact that members of the undercommons may not necessarily speak or use that language as it is expressed in their piece.

Our own response to the problem of “professionalization” is to mix the languages used across the spaces and modes of labor related to higher education programs inside prisons. This includes a blend of administrative, logical, and political rhetorics alongside various vernaculars produced by our experiences working within higher education programs in prison, institutions of higher education outside prison, and activist networks exposing and seeking to transform the connections between the prison and the University/college as institutions. These vernaculars include reference to efficiency and outcomes, academic disciplines, and the discourses surrounding the prison nation. We do this because the risk of “professional” publication on higher education programs inside prison is similar to those outlined at the outset of this section: higher education programs inside prisons supplement the failing University, offset its negligence specifically in the realm of alleged “criminality,” and displace criminality into service absorbed as value by the University. Publishing critique of this phenomena threatens to exacerbate the general problem of professional university critique. We don’t think this is a simple problem, and it does not have a simple solution. In our contribution to this *Lateral* thread we seek to explore how precisely higher education programs in prison relate to University conditions, as well as how writing about those programs rather than merely serving within them might both fit into and disrupt schemas of University professionalization.

Abolition Undercommons Labor

Moten and Harney cull the concept of the “abolition undercommons” from their account of the University and its relation to negligence or criminality (han). First, the “undercommons” describes a particular relation to the University’s organization of labor. The University accumulates the value produced by alienated labor, even as the division of labor and value operates through divisions between the pedagogical, administrative, “intellectual,” custodial, on so on. The labor performed by the upper eschelon administrators is differentiated from that of the comprador class of tenure-line faculty, which is differentiated from that of the surplus army of adjuncts and teaching assistants, which is in turn is differentiated from that of the “working classes” of custodial and service providers, which in turn is differentiated from the flexible and fungible labor of people producing technology, textiles, and physical plant materials in the global South or U.S. prisons. Critiques of the “new University” (aka the corporate, neoliberal, or global university) often focus primary on the denigration of intellectual labor and the re-valorization of administrative labor.

Some critiques, including anti-sweatshop or divestment campaigns, move beyond the status-wars between administrators, tenure-line faculty, and contingent teachers and focus on the range of labor required to maintain the current university. Confusion over who precisely provides intellectual labor, how it is formalized and what genres of intellectual labor are recognized impacts whether adjunct and graduate student labor form a distinct class in the university’s class structure. These critiques open the geography of the University to a broader map of inter-relationships, allowing us to see how “labor” and “research” are defined through international political economy writ large. This is where Moten and Harney locate the “undercommons” of the University: “Maroon communities of composition teachers, mentorless graduate students, adjunct Marxist historians, out or queer management professors, state college ethnic studies departments, closed down film programs, visa-expired Yemeni student newspaper editors, historically black college sociologists, and feminist engineers.” These people do not fit into the professionalization paradigms of specific disciplines, departments, or university spaces. They can be summoned in the names of Enlightenment categories; they are of the University’s divisions of labor, value, and humanity but not fully circumscribed by it.

Second, “abolition” describes the prophetic wish that commitment to the undercommons will abolish the condition in which academic professionalism becomes a political mode of negligence. Commitment to the undercommons leaves behind professionalism, including the professional embrace of critical education. The University is not to be salvaged in the name of the “masses” who might still enter its doors as students. It must encounter those people who inhabit the university as its unrecognized labor already, including them in the intellectual work of undoing “ethics and efficiency, responsibility and science, and numerous other choices, all built upon the theft, the conquest, the negligence of the outcast mass intellectuality of the Undercommons.” This appears as passion more than critique. Teaching is not an activity that can exceed the institutional frameworks of its own professionalization, its own inhabitation of specific classrooms, specific disciplines, specific departments. But teaching can induce something like the abolition undercommons to enter academic space: “it is not teaching then that holds this social capacity, but something that produces the not visible other side of teaching, a thinking through the skin of teaching toward a collective orientation to the knowledge object as future project, and a commitment to what we want to call the prophetic organization.”

They conclude that a commitment to the abolition undercommons departs from traditional left approaches to the university. “The slogan on the Left, then, universities, not jails, marks a choice that may not be possible. In other words, perhaps more universities promote more jails. Perhaps it is necessary finally to see that the university contains incarceration as the product of its negligence.” Organizing within the “schools not jails” framework is then misaligned, potentially reproducing networked institutions to capture more bodies. In place of this framework, they remind us: “perhaps there is another relation between the University and the Prison—beyond simple opposition or family resemblance—that the Undercommons reserves as the object and inhabitation of another abolitionism.” The Undercommons reserves this other relation, this relation thought otherwise, as that through which another abolitionism can emerge. Moten and Harney do not fill in the content of this other relation between University and Prison, and documenting this other relation in tables and charts risks the professionalized capture they continually warn against. Disclosing this other relationship is not a professional project but a process of committing to the Undercommons as the method of constituting the practice of another abolition.

Moten and Harney suggest that a commitment to the “abolition undercommons” reveals a complex relationship between the University and the Prison. Neither parallel nor opposed institutions, the University and the Prison are interconnected through the political, economic, social and cultural systems that divide and distribute labor, value and humanity. Such a grand, Enlightenment statement hides within it the additional truth, that various public and private two- and four-year universities and colleges, as well as various jails, detention centers, parole offices, state and federal prisons, and police stations, are interconnected through the political, economic, social and cultural systems that divide and distribute labor, value and humanity. The geography of these institutions is complex and uneven. One person could earn a “free” degree from a private four-year University while locked in a state prison and accumulating debt for legal services, another could incur high-interest student loan debt from attending a public or private four-year University, another could be enrolled in an on-line for profit University with a steep tuition price and student debt without matriculating on a campus, and another could be enrolled, inside prison or after release, in a public community college in a free or low cost non-degree granting employment training program. The distribution of value and humanity does not work within and across institutions as one might expect when a capitalized definite article is placed in front of “University” and “Prison.”

Moten and Harney do not address the institutional spaces in which universities and prisons intersect explicitly: pipeline programs seeking to create tracks to college for people considered “at risk” of entering the juvenile and/or adult carceral system; programs creating access to college courses and college credits for people who are currently incarcerated; and programs creating opportunities for post-release students to start or complete degrees. These programs create institutional relays between universities and prisons, although they are not often elevated to the philosophical priority of impacting relations between “The University” and “The Prison.” Our Lateral thread focuses on these institutional relays and asks if and how they participate in an “abolition undercommons.” We understand along with Moten and Harney the aim of commitment to an abolition undercommons as “not so much the abolition of prisons but the abolition of a society that could have prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society.” Thinking with Moten and Harney allows us to ask: are college in prison programs part of the abolition undercommons? What is role of “professionalization” within and through these programs? What is the role of publishing “critique” about these programs? Or about Universities and Prisons from the vantage point of working within these programs? What are the limits or dangers of passion and humanistic love revealed by these programs?

Universities in Crisis

The university is in crisis. Or so we are told with regularity across media and political sources from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to the White House. The declaration that the U.S. system of higher education is in crisis comes with a specific recitation of evidence. The evidence begins by focusing on the experience of students. First, the cost of higher education has been rising, while free or low-interest financial support for earning a college degree has flat-lined or decreased. Earning an undergraduate degree frequently requires amassing debt. According to the National Education Association (<http://educationvotes.nea.org/2013/07/02/degrees-not-debt-student-loan-debt-infographics/>), the average debt for an undergraduate degree is approximately \$26,000. Most public state universities run on tuition dollars rather than state contributions, and recent years have seen states raise tuition caps to offset dwindling public support. Second, a college degree does not necessarily lead to employment in a middle class sector or, increasingly, employment at all. Restructured labor markets and “jobless” economic recoveries decrease access to moderate-wage jobs after completing college, resulting in a generation of college graduates with high debt and little hope of paying it off.

Additional evidence is drawn from institutional and educational administration. The third focus is on the top-heavy economic structure of universities, exemplified by a widening income gap between top-level administration, mid-level tenure-line faculty, and the lowest-wage earners on campus. University economics are bolstered by the suppressed wage labor of students on campus who run academic departments, libraries, residences, food services and more, and ongoing struggles to unionize custodial or teaching labor are met with administrative resistance. Fourth, this economic model measures the university’s teaching and learning core by how well it operates as an efficient and cost-effective educational delivery system. As a result, the overwhelming majority of college and University classes are taught increasingly by flexible labor pools – contingent workers, post-doctorates, grad students, and as yet unidentified limited term labor classifications. Nationally, the New Faculty Majority (<http://www.newfacultymajority.info/equity/>) reports that less than 25% of all post-secondary classes are taught by tenure-stream faculty, those with guaranteed benefits and contract security in employment. Fifth and finally, this economic structure is reflected in a more market-driven governance structure, with higher education cultures shaped less by faculty senates,

unions or even politicians than by student loan companies, multinational food service corporations (such as Sodexo), military and big pharmaceutical research dollars, real estate developers and so on - resulting in a form of *antidevelopment*.

Most of the evidence above locates “crisis” in the changing economic structure of the four year university. Yet while state support for four year universities diminishes or is stagnant, many states are prioritizing job training and professional certification programs at community colleges, technical training institutes, or two year institutions. The “crisis” in the university is more accurately described as a transformation in the values associated with higher education, including a decreasing public stake in humanistic or arts education and increasing investment in job readiness and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields across two and four year educational attainment levels. The economic narrative of this transformation as “crisis” tends to foreground the experiences of historically white and middle-class college populations. The economic crisis narrative tends to obscure the historical relationship of poor and lower-income students seeking resources from the two and four year university and the “outcomes” promised for participating in costly access to higher education credentials. For many poor and lower-income people, access to a liberal arts education, often via a four year college or university, has always been a “crisis.”

The current focus on the “crisis” in student debt is one example of eliding what is at stake in the transformation of disabling debt and dispossession, now distributed more evenly to the former middle class. For poor people, the PELL grant has never covered the full cost of post secondary education, and access to a four year liberal arts degree that is not linked to an employment track has always been a challenge. The four year college experience has always been predicated on the experiences and life pathways of people from middle-class or affluent backgrounds, in which parents can provide ample financial support, students can take unpaid internships and study abroad programs, students are not raising children themselves or supporting family members, etc. The same might be said for the “new” interest in the role of temporary and flexible workers enabling institutional function. While the decrease in tenure stream lines is a relatively contemporary economic turn in post secondary education, the university has always been a site of the exploitation of rigidly racialized and gendered labor: custodial, food service, secretarial, etc. The focus on intellectual laborers in teaching and laboratory research is not always connected to the unionization struggles of administrative and custodial staff at the same institutions. Once again, the university is defined by its research/teaching functions rather than its institutional function as a whole.

The humanities and liberal arts are central to our understanding of either crisis or transformation. The humanities face new challenges in defining and justifying its role within the larger system of higher education. Humanities faculty and students face diminishing funding and perceived relevance in ways that cut across two and four year institutions unevenly. Humanities-based academics often respond to these problems by: a) reminding people of the value of intangible learning outcomes related to the “soul” or ethical potential of the human being; b) reminding people of the value of aesthetic judgment to the human being; c) valorizing ethical or aesthetic learning for the new global economy by focusing on adaptability and creativity as values of the knowledge economy (understood to be the middle-class domain of the U.S.); and/or d) valorizing the skill-sets of oral and written culturally competent (“multicultural”) communication for the new “diverse” global economy. The first two responses seek to translate the value of traditional humanistic fields to publics who do not understand their value, focusing on how we need to remain interested in the “human” as a crucial category of pleasure and experience. This is translated into a pedagogical mission extending the domain of humanistic research to “public humanities” aimed on a variety of publics perceived to be relevant, almost always middle-class/middle-brow to elite publics. These discourses are always framed as

race-neutral, yet often replicate racial exclusions or exhibit racial tokenism. Partnerships with major arts institutions or with community-based cultural institutions are often sought to expand the domain of humanistic research relevance.

Addressing the first two areas prioritizes humanities “research” and seeks to remind publics who have political and/or economic capital via voting and donations that humanities role at four year universities is still a priority for society and provides a valuable social good. The second two areas more often prioritize humanities “teaching” and seek recognition for the value-added benefits humanistic undergraduate training provides for capital: *Philosophy majors make excellent hedge fund managers! English majors excel at Google!* Tacit in these strategies is a focus on middle-class or elite workers who provide leadership to capital or more specifically the knowledge economy. These arguments come from four year institutions seeking ongoing public support for liberal arts and humanities undergraduate education; the experience or needs of students in two year colleges are not often addressed by four year institutions making this case. These approaches often capitulate to the narrative of economic crisis and assert that the humanities have a unique capacity to revive the failing higher education system by infusing it with humanistic values for a new economy. This approach reproduces historical justifications of the humanities as a human service -- increasing mobility into the middle-class, enculturating people into hegemonic conditions, civilizing people into productive discipline, cultivating civic duty regardless of substantive enfranchisement—but updates the tactics and methods used to “publicize” and persuade high-status publics that these values are still relevant. The world may be in economic crisis, but the humanities and liberal arts are there to resolve that crisis and direct the public toward a more integrated, holistic approach to the “human” in human capital.

An approach that addresses the transformation of higher education, rather than its crisis, shifts the perspective on the role of the humanities in “reviving” an institutional system struggling to overcome its own historical contradictions. Here the humanities and liberal arts are shown to be undergoing similar redistributive processes as the student debt described above. The humanities have historically been key to the distribution of human value through educational hierarchies; the current universities in crisis narrative reveals a transformation in the institutional divisions of value once articulated to liberal arts and humanities degrees (associated with four year institutions). The humanities cannot “resolve” the crisis in higher education by promising a revitalization of (neo)humanisms via digital and new media approaches to culture because its place in the hierarchical system of higher education is changing. Addressing transformations in two and four year colleges and universities requires attention to humanities and liberal arts programs, but not through a return to residual claims about the humanities economic or cultural value. The interface between universities/colleges, humanities and liberal arts degrees, and college in prison programs exemplifies what is at stake in current transformations of higher education in the U.S. College in Prison programs navigate the hierarchical terrain of educational values outlined here, while efforts to provide humanistic learning inside prisons reveals broader problems in how “humanization” and capitalization are distributed and denied. Situating the crisis in the universities in relation to the crisis in prisons allows us to think differently about how best to respond to these transformations.

Prisons in Crisis

In 2012-2013 a number of high profile media outlets highlighted the conditions in U.S. prisons: sexual assault by guards, overcrowding, racial segregation, inadequate mental health care, unsanitary and dehumanizing facilities. East Mississippi Correctional Facility, ostensibly designated to house people with severe mental health issues, is under investigation for high rates of suicide and self-harm (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/10/opinion/horrendous-abuse-in-mississippi-prisons.html?_r=0). The Bureau of Justice study, *Sexual Victimization in Juvenile Facilities Reported by Youth, 2012*

(<http://www.propublica.org/article/rape-and-other-sexual-violence-prevalent-in-juvenile-justice-system>), surveyed over 8,500 youth in private and public facilities across the United States and identified that over 1,720 had been sexually assaulted, multiple times, by adult staff members. In 2012 and again in 2013 thousands of people in California prisons organized widespread hunger strikes to protest inhumane conditions, including the over use of solitary confinement, and for the right to one telephone call per week and to use wall calendars. While prisons have always incurred a form of crisis for the people caged within facilitating premature death, these reports surfaced in mainstream media outlets and fueled a national discourse surrounding a “prison crisis.”

Yet despite these reports centering inhumane conditions, this is not the evidence circulated in state capitols across the U.S. As coffers shrink, budget-conscious state officials are reconsidering the economic investment in prisons. Starting in 2009, many states tried to decrease prison-related expenses through the expansion of parole and the implementation of early release programs (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/13/us/13penal.html?_r=1). Nationally, wide array of actors are visibly organizing to close prisons, reform repressive drug laws, and implement “alternative sentencing.” A 2012 Sentencing Project Report (<http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/On%20the%20Chopping%20Block%202012.pdf>) on state prison closures highlights the associated cost saving measures: in 2012, “at least six states have closed 20 prison institutions or are contemplating doing so, potentially reducing prison capacity by over 14,100 beds and resulting in an estimated \$337 million in savings.”

Prison closure is not just the agenda of Democratic politicians or the “left loony” activists. The national organization Right on Crime (<http://www.rightoncrime.com/priority-issues/prisons/>), with the tag line “the conservative case for reform: fighting crime, prioritizing victims, and protecting taxpayers,” has emerged as a significant actor promoting a “prison crisis” and advancing criminal justice reform. Advocating for many of the reforms that abolitionists and allies have pushed for, including changes to restrictive drug sentencing attached to the “war on drugs,” *Right on Crime* has made inroads in over two dozen states and counting.

These attempts by *Right on Crime* and related conservative and liberal actors to question or change public policies invariably avoid a rigorous and transparent analysis of the fundamental investments that naturalized the build up of the U.S. prison nation. As persuasively identified and theorized in recent scholarly texts, including Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (2011) and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California* (2007), the prison nation is intertwined with U.S. commitments to white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism and heteropatriarchy. Prison reform efforts that fail to see how white supremacy for example, is at the core of punishment in the United States will simply permit the reproduction of white supremacy in new mechanisms of punishment, exclusion and state sanctioned capture.

The current “crisis” in prisons is forcing the implementation of alternatives to incarceration, budgetary realignments, and legislative and sentencing reforms. States grapple with decarceration strategies, not because of an ethical recognition of the continuing harm of prisons, rather because prisons and punishment consume budgets. While structures might disappear or be repurposed, the ideological frameworks that required and naturalized these facilities do not disappear. These moments of “crisis” and transition offer opportunities for intervention and resistance to a prison nation, but also provide an opening to anticipate how the state might be preparing new forms of capture. As the debates about prison closure and implementing alternatives to incarceration develop across the U.S., the need to contain and confine superfluous or disposable bodies remains.

The shifts in the prison nation offer opportunities to engage abolition frameworks in new ways. Following W.E.B. DuBois, it is not enough to take down prisons, or to simply reform drug laws; we must name and transform how our democratic institutions continue to shut out millions from the “best of” pathways. An abolition-democracy, to use the term of Angela Davis and W.E.B. DuBois, requires reconstructing the structures *and traditions* that safeguard power and privilege, just as much as taking down those that visibly punish and oppress. Challenging the prison-nation therefore means fighting to close prisons, but it also means doing the perhaps more difficult work of opening up and reconfiguring other institutions that have shut their doors to those who have been abandoned by our punishing democracy. Universities and Colleges are among the institutions whose own viability depend upon the successful abolition not just of prisons, but of the conditions that make prisons and other punitive and carceral models possible. College in prison programs help clarify the interdependence of universities/colleges and prisons during the era of alleged crisis in education and incarceration. These programs emerge in the interstices of educational and carceral institutions, often seeming to promise resolution or escape from crisis models while costing institutions little in the way of economic, political, or cultural capital. But these programs are also poised to clarify and move beyond crisis models to create alternative engagements with the abolition undercommons.

College in Prisons

The Higher Education Act of 1965 formally brought a federally funded loan-and-work program to postsecondary education, including grant funds for students through the Pell Grant program. Pell grants enabled people across the U.S., including those in prison, to access post secondary education. The prison uprisings throughout the 1970s – from Pontiac to Attica – pushed for greater access to relevant and quality education for people behind bars. These movements linked educational access to broader aims of self-determination, racial justice, and prison abolition and were connected to larger race radical freedom struggles of the period. In the wake of these legislative and activist demands, education programs in prison flourished. By the 1990s, hundreds of college programs awarding degrees were offered in correctional facilities across the country. Community colleges held contracts with many state prisons to offer Associates Degrees and a range of vocational courses. In 1994 the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act restricted access to Pell Grants (http://realcostofprisons.org/writing/Taylor_Pell_Grants.pdf) for incarcerated people, severely impacting the ability to offer accredited college programs on the inside that awarded degrees. As a result, roughly 350 college programs in prison closed.

Despite the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act and the loss of PELL grant resources, in the last decade post-secondary programs for people behind bars around the country have begun to rebuild. In particular, more programs are being developed through partnerships between colleges, non-profits, and state Departments of Correction (<http://prisonstudiesproject.org/directory/>). There are no explicit goals shared by college in prison programs. Some programs have explicit political goals: educational access for those living on the inside is a human right, and education programming in prison is one tactic among others seeking redistributive justice. Other programs have more reformist goals: educational access for those living on the inside is a moral or rehabilitative issue, and education programming in prison is one tactic among others seeking moral and social reform of individuals linked to broader aims of greater public safety and reduced recidivism. It is difficult to track the goals and commitments of college in prison programs because all programs must operate according to the rules and expectations of the Department of Corrections. This can often require public relations materials or program rationales that favor aims of public safety, reducing recidivism, and moral uplift over aims of educational equity and social justice, regardless of the actual operating principles of the program on the ground.

Wildly uneven inside and across states, educational programs operate within and actively animate multiple narratives about the aims of either education or training in prisons. These programs have diverse institutional structures, including state-supported Graduate Equivalency Diplomas (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL) curricula and vocational trainings, volunteer offerings in creative writing and reading groups, and degree granting programs affiliated with accredited higher education institutions on the outside (including community colleges and four year universities). College programs in prison operate in the interstices of state, private, and non-profit institutions and are usually justified to foster intellectual expansion and struggle against distributive arguments over basic public education (the right to access elementary, middle, and high school equivalency). Similar to the uneven educational programs available outside prisons, critical and flexible literacies are available within and across all of these models and programs but guaranteed nowhere within any of them. Struggles to provide and ensure general access to high quality adult basic education and the completion of a GED are ongoing across states; approximately 68% of those in state prisons do not have a GED or a high school diploma. Adult basic education and GED preparation are frequently delivered through state contracts with specific community colleges or educational facilities.

The institutional relationships governing college in programs vary widely. Many are projects of specific universities (Boston University, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Bard College), some are volunteer programs that developed a University and/or Community College partnership (Cornell University and Princeton University), some are extension sites of a specific University or College (Prison University Project/Patten University and The College Program at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility/Marymount Manhattan College), and still others are non-profits partnering with distance learning programs for the incarcerated (University Beyond Bars). Affiliation with a university does not necessarily indicate that these programs can award a degree, or that students enrolled can earn credits from that university or college, or that the people taking credited classes in the prison through a particular university are understood by the university as “students” of that institution, although this is the case with several programs.

While these institutional relationships vary widely, chief distinctions seem to be the amount of control over the assignment and training of teachers, the compensation for teachers and program staff, and the permanence or sustainability of the program. The Department of Corrections (DOC) infrastructure of each program also varies. Despite the economic and political crises facing state prisons, some programs demonstrate evidence of long-term relationship building with the DOC such as offering low or no cost higher education opportunities to Correctional Staff or securing DOC commitment to sustain educational partnerships by permitting access for theater groups, art shows, or multiple volunteer programs. Program funding often follows the pattern of institutional relationships: some programs are funded entirely by their host University (staff, teachers, and tuition), some receive tuition waivers or reductions but must fundraise their own staff salaries, and some operate primarily through volunteers with limited staff or teacher salary needs. Despite declining or stagnate state contributions to higher education and endowments, restrictive enrollment post secondary institutions are becoming increasingly involved in post-secondary programs in prisons. The impetus for this involvement is often generated at the faculty and student level, with reluctant or uneven buy-in from University/college administration.

One of the most pressing issues facing college programs in prison is how to use limited space and funding to enable the maximum number of students to access meaningful course work and to complete degrees. Some programs aim at open access to as many students as possible. Prison University Project, operating out of San Quentin with the partnership of Patten University, offers open access to college readiness curriculum for all post-GED students. They may enroll in Associates of Arts classes once they complete the college readiness curriculum; the sponsoring University provides funding for tuition, teachers work as volunteers, and money

for staff and materials is developed through private grants and individual donors. Other programs offer more restricted access to their degree-granting programs, such as the Boston University Prison Education Program (<http://www.bu.edu/pep/>), which admits students who are prepared to enter a four-year program and who enroll directly as Boston University undergraduates. The University pays for student tuition, staff and teacher salaries, although the teachers are compensated at slightly less than they would earn teaching on the main campus. This program also offers DOC Staff scholarships for courses at BU. While their program has competitive admission, it partners other programs serving the broader prison population (including the Partakers program, a religious organization that provides college readiness training). Programs that do not have free tuition from a partner university—which is most often a private institution—must fundraise tuition from private foundations (one family foundation supports much of this work across the U.S.). Unlike programs in circulation prior to 1994, the majority of these educational programs are unsupported by public money or public institutions.

This is the problem confronted by efforts to create access to post-secondary education in particular: in our era college education is not free. In the context of formal credit-bearing institutions, learning is assigned a specific monetary value. Learning outcomes are secondary to program and institutional outcomes, measured by students enrolled, dollars delivered and transitions after graduation to employment. College credit can be purchased *without* any demonstrable learning taking place, as has been the complaint about some private on-line universities. But college credit cannot be earned through learning alone (without a monetary transaction) except in the rare case of honorary degrees. Course credit by examination, the lowest cost formula, still requires a fee for “testing out” of a course based on learning beyond the classroom. Prison-based programs could forego college credit and focus instead on the value of learning. But many students and participants in these programs feel strongly that college credit is a key value – it appears to promise improved confidence and greater job access post-release as well as a credential whose value transfers across the walls. While college credit does not guarantee improved post-release outcomes, and beliefs in the magical powers of formal higher education are often overstated, there is no doubt that receiving college credit for their learning is important to students on the inside. To meet the needs and expectations of students, programs must find new ways to navigate the interface between prisons and universities.

Frameworks for Engagement

A commitment to the Abolition Undercommons requires that we shift the frameworks we use to justify and operate higher education programs in prisons. Providing access to higher education for underrepresented populations is not enough. This work must be strategically and conceptually networked into wider justice movements. For those working in relation to educational access in prisons, this means creating programs focused on people rather than prisons, with the acknowledgement that currently 7.2 million people are locked behind bars or under other forms of state surveillance and punishment. Yes, we must engage people currently incarcerated, but educational programs inside prisons must be build within a broader movement designed for the end of prisons and the beginning of a society where higher education is a free public right linked to economic and political self-determination. Following Moten and Harney, we step away from any prescriptive closure yet offer some conceptual tools central for our realignment, with accompanying anxieties. This does not resolve the risks and dangers of institutionalizing higher education within and through prisons, but it does provide some beginning tools to manage and assess the justice outcomes of this work.

A key step is to shift how those working in educational programs in prisons generally define the problem from one of service/access to one of engagement/justice. Framing the problem as service obscures deeper and wider linkages and produces both individuated and structural responses that reproduce the very landscape that naturalizes and legitimates prisons and punishment. Framed as service/access, college in prison programs

implicitly address the joint “crises” in higher education and incarceration: they affirm the value of higher education while offering the state “free” services to help people transition from life inside cages to life on the streets. The illusion that higher education in and of itself can successfully ensure this transition provides cover for the broader structural failures the narrative of “crisis” obscures: that there are fewer and fewer secure jobs, at lower and lower pay; that legal discrimination against people with a prior conviction reduces access to housing, employment, enfranchisement, and social services; that many people release from prison into communities deeply impacted by economic, political, and social devaluation; and that a college degree no longer promises anyone the economic or social security entrance into the middle-class once seemed to guarantee.

Framing the problem as engagement/justice reveals the structural relations between institutions of higher education and incarceration. The development of higher education programs in prison provides an opportunity for university-based actors to shift our diagnosis of recent transformations in both universities/colleges and prisons. Participation in education programs in prison holds the potential to redistribute economic, ethical, and aesthetic values associated with self- and community-determination. Formal education is not the only pathway toward self-determination, and for many it is increasingly the vehicle least capable of supporting this goal, yet it is a powerful and resource-laden economy that we are unwilling and unable, for now, to abandon. The benefits of reconceptualizing the relationality between the University and the Prison is not only the potential redistribution of resources and their affiliated life pathways. Shifting from *access* to *justice* opens up other sites of intervention, builds potential allegiances and creates new nodes of communication. Built into the public college or university through a justice framework, education in prison programs hold the potential to ignite discourses about the very “humanistic values” that produce and naturalize our prison nation. The intimacy between these sites might enable a structural redistribution, through commitment to the abolition undercommons. Not in isolation, as actors crossing prison and campus walls, but as programs with structural linkages to these broader conditions that shape what Moten and Harney call, but don’t unpack, “complex relations.”

The move from access to justice isn’t without risk. At our sites the ongoing obstacles are profound, seemingly intractable: byzantine, mercurial and uncheckable power of the Department of Corrections, pervasively seductive hetero-gendered and racialized volunteerist scripts woven into our economic landscape, recuperative powers of the diversity and public service narratives within post secondary education, and a generalized public amnesia surrounding white supremacy and punishment. Couple these seemingly insurmountable structural problems with our own anxieties about “failure” that accompany any engagement and it seems infinitely safer to remain in the realm of critique and to offer this analysis as a provocation. Yet in this case publishing a critique in *Lateral* could be construed as precisely the kind of “professionalism” under critique here: one that masquerades as political engagement by raising questions in arenas not designed for mapping action, and where the people designated as audiences or interlocutors are not the primary political actors. Equally problematic however is the fantasy of some fully participatory answer, in particular given the motivation of “humanistic love” voiced by some educators working in prisons. The commitment to *passion* or *love*, over and against professionalism, can exacerbate highly gendered affective and cognitive orientations to institutions and affiliated individuals. This can end up reinforcing a hetero-gendered and racialized culture of volunteerism within many programs and mystifying the “complex relations” between professionalism and labor of love. While we do not locate “white ladies bountiful” among the categories of fugitive enlightenment, the role of such delimited feminist counter-modernities must be addressed in any engagement/justice approach to college in prison programs.

To counter Moten and Harney's underspecification about "another relation" and how college in prison exhibits this "other relation" to "another abolition," we argue for more precision to name the actors within these systems and clarify how "professionalism" *and its resisters* play such key roles. Structural relations between the University and the Prison include investment portfolios featuring private prison corporations such as the GEO Group (TIAA-CREF), labor contracts with prison production companies (Correctional Corporation of America), state budgetary lines separating education funding inside and outside prisons, and food service conglomerates, such as Sodexo, that service both colleges and prisons and other corporate entities. But the financial and political realities of the prison/university/philanthropic/nonprofit industrial complex does not adequately characterize how these structural relations create agency for specific human actors. The underspecification of "another relation" makes it difficult to figure out what precisely is at stake in creating and running these programs, and for whom. "White ladies bountiful," therefore, become one key to this unspecified structure, and where the gender/race/sexuality/class spectrum of activism can potentially open and unfold differently in commitment to a fugitive enlightenment. But to do this, we must run the risk of staking our claims, and naming some terms. For us greater specification, and more visibility, is key to moving college in prison programs from the interstices of institutional structure to a leverage point whose operation holds the potential to disrupt business as usual.

To begin the process of specification, we offer four guiding assumptions we use in our own work, then some basic goals for practice. Here are the assumptions:

Assumption 1) College programs in prisons do not exemplify a commitment to the abolition undercommons. They do not solve university negligence. These programs are likely to have abolition outcomes, but they themselves are not "abolition" nor is it the opportunity for campus-based laborers to escape to the undercommons from their professionalized existence.

Assumption 2) College programs in prisons do not exemplify university negligence. Some critiques point to these programs as if they create the conditions of alienated intellectual labor, professionalization as negligence, and theft of intellectual undercommons for the benefit of the university. These programs run those risks, but they do not create them.

Assumption 3) College programs in prison do intersect in crucial and potentially useful ways with broader university distributions of value, including the University division of tenure-line and adjunct faculty labor as service, teaching, and research and the division of these definitions of labor from administrative, custodial, and productive labor that maintains the university. They can play a key role in what counts as "academic" or "intellectual" labor and value within this, how we see student involvement, and the role of incarcerated students and teachers.

Assumption 4) College programs in prison do intersect in crucial and potentially useful ways with broader prison distributions of value, including the prison system's division of time to release, visitation rights, and access to volunteer programs. They can play a role in how the DOC values education as volunteer, philanthropic, humanistic, or reformatory.

And here are some goals we like. While partial and framed centering education programs in prisons the core goals are relevant to other teaching and learning sites. While one of us is wary of any work that includes checklists, the other one loves checklists because it gives people something to oppose. In that spirit we offer some beginning goals and cautions we have not necessarily been "successful" in enacting or avoiding but which shape our collaborative engagements:

- Work to develop structurally significant student boards that have real power to evaluate and shape courses. This should not be a naïve or romantic “the student always knows best” but a substantive feedback loop that co-constructs programs.
- Create an ongoing culture of political education around and through the program and the courses offered for all participants, including staff and faculty.
- Keep track of and make visible how dominant and problematic racialized, gendered and (hetero)sexualized patterns of labor are reproduced within the work.
- Work to link struggles for educational access for those inside prisons to wider movements for free, quality, public K-16 education.
- Represent the program inside and outside the host university and/or prison with a narrative that does not center public service but instead the right to access public education.
- Understand how labor conditions and contexts shape all work and learning across Prisons and Universities.
- Consider carefully how relationships with DOC (and Universities) are constructed. The strategies of formal institutionalization and autonomy are not wholly feasible, and structural pathways appear to deliver corresponding and complex traps that constrain abolitionist aims.
- Be prepared to walk away from the work; depersonalize investment, do not “own” the program or the process. Perhaps set a term limit and train replacements; this can help with ongoing organizer and leadership development a commitment to ongoing organizer and leadership development and create checks and balances on unhelpful ego-investment, hero/martyr complexes, and institutionalization into a prison mindset.

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Queer the Noise

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Between Meaning and Becoming: Some Introductory Notes on Queering the Noise

Christina Nadler and Megan C. Turner

In reference to his contribution to the Museum of Modern Art exhibit *Soundings* (<http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2013/soundings/>), German sound artist Carsten Nicolai states, “Our body produces sound, our body is sound.” Calling out the presence of chaos within order, his work *wellenwanne lfo* (2012) (http://www.carstennicolai.de/?c=works&w=wellenwanne_lfo) challenges normativity by rendering the inaudible visible as the rippling waves in a water tank. By destabilizing the boundary between the phonic and the optic, Nicolai’s work effectively queers sound. Beyond merely representing the aural, *wellenwanne lfo* (2012) embodies sound. In this respect, it highlights some of the tensions between meaning and becoming that Queer the Noise means to engage. Instead of simply representing sound, Nicolai’s project engages the becoming of sound as a *body without organs*, which refuses the normative functioning of the body. Here, normative sensation blurs. In this Deleuzian move, we no longer just hear sound, we see sound, we feel sound, or as Nicolai states in the above description, we are sound. For us, this is an expression of our queer capability. Queerness is a refusal, a calling-out of, an I-forgot-to-even-notice normativity. This is not just sexual, yet it is always sexual and always bodily. When we realize the sounding capabilities of our bodies, what kinds of queer noise can we make?

As a disturbance that is primarily materialized through bodies, sound situates itself as a medium through which a body’s relationship to heteronormative temporalities, socialities, and desires can be mediated, disrupted, and transformed. Indeed, in a 2010 interview, Drew Daniel of Matmos argued for the essential queerness of sound itself. Defining queerness as what exceeds values and top-down structures, Daniel contended that because sound exists apart from language—and language is how systems of value are structured and imposed—it allows for the expression of desires and subjectivities that are otherwise unthinkable or unspeakable. While sound is here linked to the epistemological impossibilities that organize poststructural constructions of queerness, it also provides a starting point for thinking about the queer potentialities embedded in non-representational sound. Can we queer the noise, or is noise always-already queer? Does silence always equal queer death (all respect to ACT UP, notwithstanding) or can some silences speak queerly?

In different ways, the body of texts collected in this thread comprise a multimodal engagement with the intersection of queerness and aurality. In both format and formal characteristics, many of the included texts inhabit liminal generic spaces and hybrid media forms, continually threatening to push beyond existing format categories and, in doing so, continually gesture towards the perpetual coming-into-being that characterizes sound. Shanté Paradigm Smalls' piece combines autobiographical account, participant observation, and formal academic writing to more fully account for the ways in which beat-boxing "speaks" within hip hop communities even as the critically-aware academic writer attempts to speak "about" that community without drowning out the beat-boxer's sound. Andy Ditzler's recording blurs the lines between theory, aural ethnography, and critical intervention. Framed as an attempt to archive a site-specific "telling" of one queer-identified man's history, it is in the recording's failure to capture that telling as a "whole" (i.e., in ways that perpetuate the fantasy of unmediated access to the past by rendering the fact of recording invisible) that the piece's queer potentialities emerge. Although Yvette Janine Jackson's radio opera is marked more explicitly by formal artistic interventions, it, too, demonstrates archival dimensions even as it enacts a textual space of synaesthetic play by rendering the oppositional discursive construction of queerness and blackness audible.

Since queer soundings can only ever be heard in relation to the formations of institutional, cultural, and juridical power that have sought to silence non-heteronormative desires, practices, and experiences, the mutual constitution of sound and space that Shaffer pointed to in *Soundscape* (1977) takes on a particular meaning in relation to queer aurality. Indeed, even as queer soundings signify the failed silencing of queer voices and experiences, we hear queer sounds as inextricably marked by the local social, spatial, and cultural cartographies from which they emerge even as (or perhaps especially when) they open up new spaces for articulating and enacting non-normative histories and subjectivities. Throughout Meredith Heil's *Whistlin' Dixie*, we see the ways in which music provides a space for queer world-building, self-making and community formation in a region typically understood by urban queer communities as antithetical to queer life. In mainstream, cosmopolitan queer culture, rural spaces in the Midwest and the South are spaces of death — either literal death (as in the well-publicized murders of Brandon Teena and Matthew Sheppard, among others) or the symbolic death of the closet, with its attendant silences and pervasive isolation — and yet Heil's piece repopulates these spaces with queer music and, more to the point, with queer voices capable of speaking to their own histories, experiences, and desires. In Andy Ditzler's project, silences — or, rather, abeyances in orality — create the conditions of possibility for an engagement with queer historical moments that recognizes and responds to the mutual constitution of past and present, tracing out the ways in which the telling (and hearing) of queer histories is saturated by the social, material, and environmental conditions of its telling, recording, and listening. Listening to his recording of a public performance of queer oral history, we hear the ecology of silences, whispers, noises, and distortions that

circulate within, and are produced by, the queer archive as a call to enter into the immersive space of queer memory. Rather than equating silence with death, Ditzler's recording reminds us of the generative possibilities that emerge from "not the telling of a story but the hearing of it, in the in-between spaces where queer people thrive."

Indeed, many of the pieces included in this thread invite us to hear the queer potentialities embedded in moments of imperfect or impossible transmission. Distortion, sustain, glitch, repetitions with a difference, and differences which can never be repeated...all of these take on new dimensions of meaning in relation to queerness's embrace of the unstable, the ephemeral, the perverse, and the unspeakable. Daniel J Sander's article specifically takes up noise as a tactic that enacts "the stigmatizing cut of queerness" in ways that take up contamination, fragmentation, abjection, and melancholia as modes of queer subjectivity and sociality. By tracing the echoic afterlives of Foreigner's "I Want To Know What Love Is" in explicitly queer texts, Sander links the aural contamination of the original song to practices of queer world-building and self-making that inhabit those spaces which cannot be redeemed by the logics of capitalist production and reproductive futurity.

As many submissions point to in direct and indirect ways, the boundaries of "noise" — like the boundaries of "queer" — are never stable, but are in fact defined by what exceeds, what goes beyond, what cannot be contained, what cannot be represented or spoken. In this sense, Elisa Kreisinger's video presents a queer noise not in the phonic sense, but in the epistemological sense. If we understand "noise" to be not just a sonic phenomenon but also a register of value and an epistemological precondition (i.e., noise is what must be edited out for sound to have any stable meaning), then Elisa Kreisinger's clever reworking of the dialogue from *Mad Men* introduces to the show's portrayal of 1950s corporate and advertising culture a queer noise that makes audible the homoerotic desires and potentialities that are always already embedded in these spaces. Sound and silence are crucial to this intervention, for the desires that are otherwise unspeakable in this space are articulated in and through silences. By making silences not only speak, but speak queerly, Kreisinger inverts the pattern of silencing that has historically been used to render queer desires publicly unspeakable. In contrast, Amalle Dublon's piece takes up extensity — the drawing out of certain sounds in verbal speech — as a phonic gesture that exceeds the temporal (and we might argue productive) regulations of merely representative, coded speech. In doing so, extensity creates what Dublon describes as "a kind of anticipatory penumbra that halos and holds the unstable coordination of mutual respondents." Here, Dublon's work seemingly provides an entry point into imagining queer community-formation as a project made possible by phonic excess.

Several of the pieces in this thread demonstrate the ways in which an engagement in the phonic intersections between queerness and blackness can point to the materiality of desire and its constitutive effect on conceptions of historical trauma, erasure, and futurity. In *In*

the Break, Fred Moten turns to sound as an epistemic force for reanimating the aporias of black historical subjectivity in ways that haunt the present by disrupting the linear temporalities and teleologies of progress. Hilary Berwick's annotated playlist suggests that black musical practices enact temporal interventions within which currents of desire, identification and memory reshape the boundaries of what is representable. Indeed, Berwick's discussion of haunting as a primary mode of hip hop representation demonstrates the potential contributions that engagements with sonic culture could make to explorations of the erotic and psychoanalytic dimensions of black historical memory and practices of remembrance, particularly as it relates to reckoning with trauma. In a different (though related) context, Yvette Janine Jackson's radio opera, *Invisible People*, demonstrates the fragmentary effects produced by aural haunting by combining samples of instrumental music, creaking, sermons, sound bytes, non-verbal vocalizations, and non-representational noises to reproduce the impossible position of the queer black subject in the disjunction between homophobia in the African American community and racism in the gay rights community. The result is a deeply unsettling aural space, a fragmented, multi-layered soundscape haunted by jazz, distortions, exclusionary speech acts, and illegible sounds — acoustic markers that map out a political, cultural and sonic topography that refuses to provide the listener with a stable, cohesive orientation. The prominence of electronic distortion here gestures towards a queer black futurity even as the unspeakability of a queer black subject seemingly forecloses that possibility.

The pieces in *Queer the Noise* give us a variety of ways to engage with the semiotic and social meanings embedded in specific sounds and to explore the ontological resonance of sounds on (and of) non-normative bodies. The issues raised by this constellation of texts have implications not just for sound studies and queer theory, but also for this continuing academic and artistic struggle between representation and becoming. Subverting the boundary between critique and representation, the pieces collected here highlight ways of knowing and speaking about queerness that have not traditionally been privileged in the academic world. In this respect, the pieces collected in this thread constitute an epistemological noise within the academe, highlighting the boundaries of current scholarship while gesturing towards new ways of knowing and speaking queerly just on the horizon.

‘Make the Music with Your Mouth’: Sonic Subjectivity and Post-Modern Identity Formations in Beatboxing

Shanté Paradigm Smalls

Abstract

This paper investigates the possibilities of pleasure, sound, and the disruption of the iterations of identity in progressive time. How does sound reformulate how we see whiteness, heterosexuality, and female-bodied people? Beatboxing as a citational and intertextual form — phatic, rhythmic, sonorous, and lyrically side-steps some of the traps of rap music or other hip hop forms through its embodiment of sounds rather the logics of lyrics and traditional musical structure. In that way it remakes — queers — our alliances, allegiances, and sonic sensibilities.

Sonic Acceptance: The beatbox cipher

I entered my first hip hop cipher using human beatboxing. At ten years old, I wasn’t terribly witty or clever like my worldly thirteen year-old brother and male cousins, but I was obsessed with rap music and being a participant in rap music and hip hop culture. Every time I would try to rhyme, I messed up the cadence, flow, and tempo of the impromptu session. My “voice was too light” as Jay-Z would proclaim some 25 years later; my sense of rhythm — abysmal. It’s a small wonder I went on to pursue a music career as a singer and an emcee, because I really had no audible prowess. But I loved making sounds, I loved music, and I loved what I heard foundational NYC human beatboxers Doug E. Fresh, Darren “Buff Love” Robinson aka “The Human Beatbox,” and Biz Markie sonically render with their mouths and a microphone. After my pitiful, short beatbox demonstration, I gained some respect and some inclusion into the exclusively male cipher on the southwest corner of 124th Street in Harlem, NY, USA. That sonic pass would make it possible for me to occupy active performance space usually relegated to boys and men, as women and girls were relegated to watchers and listeners. My newfound sonic dexterity transformed my subject position — from “girl,” who could be ignored and dismissed — to a b-girl with beatbox skills; someone invested in and competent at an aesthetic form valued by her peers.

I share that story as a bridge memory spanning space, time, sound, and embodiment in order to think about sonic subjectivity and possibility in the music-and sound-making of Say Wut?! (Ashley Moyer) and Lucky Monkey (Tiffany Ashfield), two of the beatboxers at the First Annual American Human Beatbox Festival, organized by beat rhymer Kid Lucky (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ru_9cU0opoQ), and held at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club in New York City, May 15-19th, 2011. Say Wut?! and Lucky Monkey both performed at the “Women of the 5th; Element” night dedicated to female human beatboxers. Kid Lucky set aside the night to celebrate and highlight female talent often overlooked in beatboxing. The sonic subjectivity I’m evoking resonates with Margaret Walker’s argument in her review of Naomi Cummings’ book, *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification*. Walker contends (<http://library.music.utoronto.ca/discourses-in-music/v4n1a5.html>) “we look for meaning in the reception or consumption of sounds or even the sounds themselves, rather than in the human actions and interactions that produce them” (2002). Walker’s statement could be read in two ways: one way posits that meaning is made solely through sound and its reception, not the bodies or relations that create them. Another reading points to the insufficiency of relying on sound alone without accounting for the human bodies that produce them and the social relations produced through the relationship of sound to bodies. My definition of sonic subjectivity extends on this second reading to think through the ways social categories and social relationships might be reconstituted through aural interventions. Sounding and resounding bodies and audiences can generate or reform the stability of racial, gender, and sexual identities, highlighting how these social positions are informed by tone, tenor, timbre, accent, inflection, rhythm, melody, and cadence. Sonic subjectivity indexes subject positions is rendered through and by sound; sonic subjectivity also plays with the subjectivity of identity and how its fluctuations are thrown into audible relief through sound.

Beatboxing the body

When revisiting the short videos I made of Say Wut?! and Lucky Monkey’s performances, I noticed my pleasure and delight at the musical virtuosity of the beatboxers. Because human beatboxing resists the constraints of strict music formalism,^[1] it allows for the creative interaction of the beatboxer and her audience. According to the construction paradigm of music cognition, “musical meaning rests, not in a series of sonic patterns, but in the human recognition and acceptance of a particular sonic series as music” (Walker 2000, 28). There is a tension between the formalist aesthetics of music theory and the relationship and aesthetics of performance and audience reception. Jonathan A. Neufeld writing in response to Peter Kivy’s arguments regarding musical interpretation and performance in both *Music Alone* (1991) and *Authenticities* (1998) suggests “it is not only admitted that a number of visual, gestural, and contextual elements of the performance tell us immediately and viscerally about the work; they can also expand our understanding of the work. A wide variety of properties of the performance — sonic or otherwise — can aid us in refining the identification and

evaluations of the properties of the work itself” (“Musical Formalism and Political Performances,” 5). Neufield attends to the various investments and subjectivities of a reviewer, but also underscores how place and time nuance a reading of any performance — for instance, the reception and controversy of a performance of Wagner’s music in Israel where he is banned (2). Music performance, then, is not only about the semantic and logistic elements of musical and sonic aesthetics, but also includes the bodies that perform them, the place in which they are performed, the history of the genre, and the wide-ranging investments of the audience.

Beatboxing, like the other elements of hip hop,^[2] is an art form influenced by multiply sound genealogies, including French troubadours, North Indian “vocal bols,” West African ritual music, jazz, blues, barbershop quartets, and Japanese technology (Roland drum machines) (Tyte and White Noise 2009; McCabe 2011). Beatboxing combines phatic, imitative, emotive, sonorous, and musical elements using throat, tongue, teeth, breath, stomach, mouth, lungs, cheeks, neck, fingers, and other embodied elements to create a sonic relational feedback loop with the listener. Beatboxing is a form of vocal percussion used to imitate the sound of drum machines and beat patterns using ones mouth, lips, tongue, voice, and throat (Tyte and White Noise, “Part 2: The Old Skool”). Human beatboxers and beatbox historians, TyTe and White Noise note three prominent styles of beatboxing: vocal percussion emulating percussive sounds, including drum beats; beatboxing which sounds like a ‘beat box’ or a drum machine and is associated with “urban styles”; and multivocalism, “a term used for artists who use beatboxing, vocal scratching, singing, MCing and poetry in their performances.”^[3] Beatboxing has become a promiscuous form, incorporating as many genres as an artist or group can accommodate. Like the emcee and the DJ, the beatboxer can shine with the encouragement of the live audience, riffing off of the hoots, laughter, shouts, cries, exclamations, and moans of the audience. As Tok Thompson (2006) argues, beatboxing is outside of the record industry, often performed live at impromptu and scheduled performance spaces, and is a global performance genre due to the presence of the Internet, specifically, *YouTube* (171-173). Thompson asserts this globalization has delocated beatboxing from one locale (urban US cities associated with blackness) to many locales (178), inclusive of the originary hip hop spaces with which beatboxing is often associated. Thompson further states, “ [i]f before one could tell one’s nationality, perhaps ethnicity, perhaps even language, by hearing one’s folk music, with beatboxing, emergent vernacular forms no longer carry conspicuous signs of geography, and hence, ethnicity” (178). Thompson argues beatboxing renders geography, perhaps nation-states, along with ethnicity archaic. Conversations with beatboxers, vocal percussionists, and beat rhymers point to different evidence: many relish in the syntactic and aural distinctions influenced by language and region.^[4] Rather than eschewing geographic, ethnic, linguistic, and other identitarian investments beatboxing enmeshes them, building on established sonic cartographies^[5] while initiating new ones. How might we read and hear

beatboxing as not simply a shift from localized racial (or ethnic as Thompson writes) performances to globalized ones, but concurrently, as a sonic modality possessing the possibility of queering gender, race, sexuality, technology, and desire?

Who Dat?: Say Wut?!, race, desire, and sound

Say Wut?! sauntered on the stage with all of the sultry femininity of a nightclub singer. Dressed in a form-fitting black cocktail dress, her bright red corkscrew curls peeking out from under her embroidered hat (cocked to the side), Say Wut?! signified as both an enigma and a siren. Her laconic stroll from backstage to stage left, while carrying a black mug filled with steaming tea, seemed to enthrall the audience as they responded with whistles and hoots. There was something about her affect — her confident nonchalance, her poise, her wowing us into respectful silence with her introductory song — that began to allay my fears about usurpation of Black and Brown female bodies missing from “The Women of the 5th Element” night. As Thompson (2011), Hoch (2006), and McCabe note, beatboxing as sonic practice and art resists the bounds of racialization and racial allegiance. Hoch, especially, underscores the limits of confining hip hop arts to Black American bodies, stating the “notion that hip-hop is solely and African American art form is erroneous [...] [i]t is certainly part of the African continuum, and if it were not for African American there would be no hip-hop, but hip-hop would not exist if were not for the polycultural social construct of New York City in the 1970s” (351). Hoch’s argument manages to both center and expand on African Americans’ contribution to hip hop culture. Hoch notes both the expansiveness of the African continuum (especially the Caribbean) and the polycultural locality of New York City with its queer, disco, funk, punk, Puerto Rican, Asian, and other influences. Even knowing Hoch to be correct and agreeing with him, I experienced reactionary anxiety regarding who gets praised and rewarded for performing hip hop art. I wondered why there weren’t Black and Brown female bodies scheduled to perform. I knew the multi-racial and multi-gender audience was there to celebrate women in beatboxing as they are often overlooked. Beatboxing, as well as other forms of hip hop and music-making in general, is rendered male. Organizer Kid Lucky felt strongly that women and girls, often more inventive and daring beatboxers in his view, are pushed to the side in a storm of machismo and masculinist bullying. He wanted the world to see and hear what he knew existed — a cadre of world-class female beatboxers. But on the other hand, I experienced concerns that women in beatboxing seemed to mean non-Black or Brown women and I questioned the political and representational effects of the lack of those bodies.^[6]

These concerns did not prevent me from visually and sonically engaging with Say Wut?!, rather those apprehensions waited in uneasy abeyance while I experienced Say Wut?!’s visual presentation. Her zaftig beauty and cool demeanor and the audience’s reaction to her represent a tangle of auditory, biological, ontological, and sensate responses. Various audience members cue their attraction and desire through gasps, sensual murmurs, and furtive

conversation amplified by the deep darkness of the space. Finally, someone, bubbling over with enthusiasm, loudly shouts “DAMN!” to indicate his approval of her fineness. There’s a kind of visual dissonance indexed by her whiteness and her sensuality; her sensuality is not only for our passive consumption. Rather, her sexiness and the confidence of her walk, actively draw the eye and soon the ear of the audience to her. Then she begins to beatbox and it’s all over.^[7] The transition from song to beatbox is almost cinematic. She inhales a deep breath, breaking the rapt silence her singing commanded. Two minutes into her 17-minute performance and she’s already seduced us visually, impressed us through her singing, and then she interrupts those gendered acts with smart, complex, skilled beatbox techniques often made synonymous with technology and masculinity.^[8] Say Wut?! spits heavy bass beats, tinny high hat tones, and mimics scratching of records with rhythmic dexterity. She seamlessly transitions from hip hop beats to house ones and back, slipping in and out of beatboxing and multivocalism, demonstrating her musical knowledge and performance range.

Once we are under her visual spell, she pulls out a hat track, producing a harmonica. This dénouement is quite quotidian as it first appears Say Wut?! is adjusting her brassiere. Instead she notes, “Right here, in my boob [male voice offstage shouts: ‘Yuh’], I’ve got a harmonica [crowd laughs]” (12:09) (<http://youtu.be/gD5D2Y5Xs4A?t=12m9s>). Say Wut? smartly holds us in anticipation; she doesn’t play the harmonica at first. Instead, she constructs layered beats: a ticking “scratch” track,^[9] a booming base downbeat, intermediate record scratching sounds, tongue clicks, and her own breathy harmonizing. She begins to wave the harmonica like a conductor’s baton, keeping time and rhythm and moving the harmonica inexorably closer to her performing mouth. She stares at the harmonica (all the while still beatboxing), her long eyelashes come into view. Her look is inscrutable and it’s hard to tell whether she views the harmonica as friend or foe (or friend and foe). I remember experiencing a frisson of nervousness for her: “Had she done this before? Is she unsure? Oh, please don’t let her fuck this up!”

The audience is deathly silent for the first time during Say Wut?!’s performance. There are no approving hoots or flirty shouts. She beatboxes breath into the first note of the harmonica as if testing its sound. There’s a shaky transition from her prolific beatboxing to the complex multivocalism she is attempting. Her voice seems loud and unsure in the silent black box theatre and the harmonica sounds crass and unrehearsed. Say Wut?! pulls both microphone and harmonica from her mouth for three seconds, a seemingly interminable amount of time. When she breathes life into the harmonica this time (14:05) (<http://youtu.be/gD5D2Y5Xs4A?t=14m5s>), the audience laughs and chuckles at her now-recognizable prolificness and her astounding audacity; we are relieved she was merely preparing us for her splendid display. The first “What?!” screamed by a female audience member punctuates the approval and incredulity at Say Wut?!’s sonic audacity. It also sonically and syntactically mimics her name and its accompanying punctuation. Her name anticipates the scrutiny and dismissal she may face based on the topographical: skin color,

gender, and beauty. But the audience is with her, our bond to her is one of theatrical methexis — we willingly participate in this ritual or sonic-becoming. Say Wut?!’s harmonic moment was a reconfiguring one: highlighting the musical dexterity of the beatboxer — her ear and voice are finely tuned — reformulated what is music and musical imagery. She breathes, the harmonica sounds, we respond with whoops and screams. Walker postulates “many music metaphors are movement metaphors...] (f)orming a hypothesis of musical meaning, not only of sound, but also of space, motion, and tactility” (34). She adds that thinking this way seems “illogical” but that this is also how musicians verbalize musical concepts (34). Say Wut?!’ performance was sonic, but it also *moved* the audience through a visual consumption to a sonic one. She brought took us on a journey, mixing visual, sonic, and tonal pleasure, confusing the ways “female” and “hip hop” are rendered. Say Wut?! uses her physical attractiveness to lure us in, but unlike a siren she does not dash us against rocks, rather she gifts us with multivocality that enhances our desire, our pleasure, and our sonic repertoire — she makes love to us through the musical and sonic movement, all with her voice, breath, tongue, a microphone, and a harmonica.



Say Wut?!’s gender presentation is the lure that disarms the audience both from potential overdetermined racialization of her white body and it makes the audience more receptive to her. Her presentation and her beatbox dexterity make a formative impression on her audience regardless of the level of erotic attachment, but I want underscore the visual presentation of a sexy, zaftig young white woman and beatbox virtuoso are at odds in the audience’s imagination.^[10] Her physiology is a contradiction as she plays with our desire for both her

body's sensual potential and her body's actualization of mastery over our senses (sight, sound, desire to touch, etc.). Her sonic subjectivity manipulates and plays with the highly scripted gendered and racialized one she presents. Her gender presentation disrupts as it soothes, paving the way for our expectations about what a "hot girl" can do in hip hop art.

In *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flaw* (2011), Freya Jarman-Ivens postulates in contrast to Connor's (2000) and in extension of Guarracino's (2006) work on gender and the voice that "the biology of the listener of the singer is something of a red herring; what is important in the ontology of the voice is its capacity always-already to detach the signifier of the vocal wave form from the signified identity of the voice's producer." This, she argues, "keep[s] open the possibility for multiple gender identities, at least until such time as identity is conferred upon the voice's producer by the listener" (3). This liberal and arguably liberatory reading operates to deconstruct the gender binary both at the level of male/female and cis/trans; it makes room for "multiple" and, perhaps, new gender identities. Jarman-Ivens does not explicitly think through the racial implications for the queered voice produced by this space of open possibility, but she draws attention to the "voice not only in terms of its production *by* the body, but its implications *for* the body — its production *of* bodies" (8). How might we employ this reading critically to the intersection of gender and race?

Queerness as I'm framing it here exposes and offers an alternative to the symbiotic structures of white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity (and homonormativity), and unfettered capitalism. It is especially important to think through the ways heteronormativity and racism constitute one another. As Patricia Hill Collins (2005) clarifies, "the assumption that racism and heterosexism constitute two separate systems of oppression masks how each relies upon the other for meaning...[neither system...] makes sense without the other [they are] better viewed as sharing one history with similar yet disparate effects...differentiated by race, gender, sexuality, class, and nationality" (88). Reframing Jarman-Ivens' work regarding voice and gender to take Collin's analysis into consideration, might the voice producer's race also be a "red herring" that is reconfigured through the vocal performance and the interaction between the listener and the audience? Mark Anthony Neal, while discussing "white performances of black idioms," argues "for a separate category known as 'white chocolate'" — R&B and soul performers who "challenge[] essentialist arguments about who is *allowed* to sing black music."^[11] Neal contends California-born soul-siren, Teena Marie (1956-2010) and British crooner Lewis Taylor (born circa 1960s-) each constitutes a different breed of white musician performing "so-called black style[s]" from earlier and contemporary minstrel and caricatured black music aesthetics. Neal frames his argument for Marie's and Lewis' affective black performances as one of sincerity in the vein of John L. Jackson, Jr.'s work. Johnson, according to Neal, "argues...sincerity presumes a liaison between subjects..." Questions of sincerity imply social interlocutors who presume one another's humanity, interiority, and subjectivity. It is a subject-subject interaction, not the subject-object model that

authenticity presumes — and to which critiques of authenticity implicitly reduce every racial exchange.”^[12] Neal continues on with convincing portrait of Marie and Taylor’s sincere investment in black American (and other) music styles. While I concur with that argument, I am drawn to Johnson’s distinction between subject-subject and subject-object relations. Mainly, I take Johnson’s sincerity to indicate a relationship, an investment, in black music audiences (in this case) as well as in black music styles. To my mind, what makes Marie’s and Taylor’s music appealing to black audiences and those invested in black musical traditions, particularly Marie whose music is a staple in many black American households from the 1970s on, is her investment in black people and black aesthetics. Unlike other musicians who “try out” black styles because they are fun, trendy, or carry the gravitas of black “cool” (see Taylor Swift’s desire to make an hip hop album, Miley Cyrus, or Justin Bieber), Marie, in particular, wrote lyrics, lived a life, and made music that spoke to the experiences, heroes, and stylistic traditions of a black radical tradition.

Marie belongs to black radical tradition aesthetics in the mode of Fred Moten’s claim for “the material reproductivity of black performance and to claim for this reproductivity the status of an ontological condition.”^[13] Blackness can be reproduced on and through the body, but Moten re-en-genders the maternal one who precedes black masculine performative mastery (24). But what is at stake when we position non-black bodies as embodying, not simply imitating, black radical tradition aesthetics? It is one thing for an artist to “sound black,” it is another for black audiences to have the cognitive dissonant response of being unable to see the performer who’s sonic tone resonates blackly even as the performer is un-black corporeally. Sound, flow, lyrical mastery, cadence, music history knowledge, affect and gesture, clothing style, personal relationships, vocal ability, and audience approval are some of the factors in this complex amalgam of racial dissonance and performance, especially in hip hop performance and culture. It’s a performance that cannot be seen as one, yet is known to be just that. As Moten professes, “*sound gives us back the visuality that ocularcentrism had repressed.*”^[14] Visuality points to the ways vision is constructed variously — how we see, how we’re made to see, how we are allowed to see, and who we see seeing and unseeing (Hal Foster), this is quite a different use from Nicola Mirzoeff’s visuality, which has to do with “a regime of visualizations, not images, as conjured by the autocratic leader, whether plantation overseer, the general, the colonial governor, the fascist dictator, or the present-day ‘authoritarian leader’” (2012/13, xxx); and in this modality we might be able to think about how the queer body, or rather white queer(ed) voice re-sounds the black radical aesthetic tradition. Moten’s intervention re-centers black maternal voices into a highly masculinist and masculinized tradition of black radicalism. If one can not wholly get behind Moten’s assertion of the ontology of black performance as a static ontological beginning, but rather as an affective ontological watershed in the process of subjectivity, queerness intervenes here as a fork in the road of historical and state mandated blackness, versus the performance and performative blackness which artists use as

tools of black liberation and black freedom. The black radical aesthetic tradition is also a subversive tool that seduces non-blacks and blacks away from the fantasy of white supremacy and white homonormativity with its “just like” both black and straight rhetoric of fascist sameness. As Lisa Duggan has written, “the new homonormativity [is] ...] a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them” (2002: 175). Say Wut?! firmly falls into this iteration of black radical aesthetics which affirms the use of the tools of performative blackness by bodies of all racializations. [\[15\]](#)

Lucky Monkey: Performing heterosexuality

Lucky Monkey and her husband, Fat Tony, offered the audience at the “Women of the 5th Element” performance a different intersubjective consideration. Unlike Say Wut?!, Monkey was dressed in a more typical hip hop performance garb: a retro cool Mario Brothers tee-shirt, jeans, and sneakers. Her shoulder-length brown hair was parted in the middle and her was unmarred by make-up. She looked like b-boy girl about to do her thing. Lucky Monkey’s sonic repertoire was oriented around hip hop beats, hip hop songs she sampled, dancehall, and drum-and-bass beats. [\[16\]](#)



She often used her hands to underscore the record-scratching sounds she made with her mouth, performing as both beatboxer and DJ. Her musical presence was energetic and upbeat and the audience hooted, hollered, and screamed their approval and support. When Fat Tony approached

the stage from the front row, the audience clapped, and waited to see what he would add to her already accomplished and electric performance. Fat Tony was taller and thinner in relation to Lucky Monkey. He was dressed similarly to Monkey, although he wore black combat boots instead of sneakers. His hair and facial hair were carefully styled and his “look” read as much more deliberate than Lucky Monkey’s. I recall feeling somewhat annoyed and perplexed and then curious when Monkey called Fat Tony up to perform with her. After all, wasn’t this *women* of the 5th Element, the 5th core unit, of hip hop? Had men called up their female friends, lovers, and artists to beatbox or perform with them on the other nights? These irritated contemplations muted and transformed when I saw the following bit: Lucky Monkey and Fat Tony move closer to one another and face one another, leaving the crowd looking at their profiles. As they approach Monkey drops her microphone and Tony raises his and they share one microphone. The way Fat Tony holds the microphone (to the side of both their mouths and out of sight from the audience), it appears as if they are sharing an open mouth kiss as they beatbox with and over one another. The moment is erotically charged not simply because of the position of their mouths and tongues in relation to each other, but also is relation to the phallic microphone that they share in this sonic threesome.^[17] We in the audience laugh uproariously, scream out encouragement (“I love it!”) and incredulity (“Oh no he didn’t!”) — there is a sense of conviviality and fun in the theatre. Lucky Monkey and Fat Tony perform deftly and humorously. The two turn a potentially schlocky husband-wife heterosexual white domestic encounter — kissing — into a performative musical/sonic moment. Rather than being cute, they transfigure their romantic relationship into a musical one, forcing us to reimagine their public and private life as a consummate beatbox duo. As they shift tonality and timbre, as well as tempo and meter, to the two-step drum-and-bass sound, it further complicates the pleasantness of the encounter. Their dissonant resonance acts as a momentary disruption to the imagined scenes of offstage domestic bliss and easy collaboration. The physicality of the act — sharing breath, spittle, the buzzing of touching lips, the pressing of noses against the other’s face, all amplified by microphone — approximate and supersede the image of a kiss. Instead of a kiss, a semi-private act, this musical, open-mouthed kiss externalizes the internal body processes. The audience thrills at this audacity. I had never seen such a scene and was compelled by the cooperation taking place. Rather than beatbox battling, the only form of beatbox intersubjectivity with which I was familiar, the two collaborated in a way that subsumed neither, but riffed off their romantic collocation. As my choked out, laughing, “That is awesome!” expressed, there was a sense wonder and pause at the creativity and a feeling of freedom that emerged. I read the moment as a revising of heterosexual relations in which mutuality, rather than domination or equality, was at play. In this performance, they were “straight with a twist” as Calvin Thomas (2000) writes. Thomas describes the process of applying queer theory to straight subjects and/or “queer-savvy” straight theorists using not “to appropriate queer theory but to proliferate its findings and

insights” (3). Though a seemingly straight couple, I read their beatboxing duet as interrupting heteronormativity in the way their performance puts both bodies on display rather than repressing the male body in order to produce heteromascularity (Thomas 2000, 4).

When the two finally break apart and Fat Tony looks at Lucky Monkey with adoring sexy eyes, it was riveting. Fat Tony looked as if he wanted to make out with Monkey right there. Licking his lips with LL Cool J smoothness, he takes her head in his hand, the gesture communicating a kiss’ approximation. We, the mixed race, mostly male audience giggle, we titter, and finally the audience just lets out raucous laughter as the two perform a beatbox make out. Whether this performance was highly rehearsed and scripted, improvised, or a mixture of the two, the desire between the two (and holding forth from my camera angle, you can only see his desire, but you can *hear* both of theirs) is striking for the way it also complicates the embodied performance of heterosexuality. Their performance exposes white heterosexuality as a performance while they constantly sonically interrupt domestic bliss, make-out sessions, and the futurity of sexually coupling through their close, intimate beatbox duet.

Fred Maus investigates the gendered writing of musical theory and how the practice of listening is also gendered and codified in musical writing. He notes the writer controls the sexual pleasure of the listener as music is “pulsating rhythms, hypersensitive surfaces, and elaborate patterning of climaxes, it can give a particularly intense, concentrated, sensuous pleasure” (Maus “Masculine Discourse” 273). The music, he argues, initiates and controls the listener’s experience and poses a threat to rigid masculinity. As he argues, “[i]t’s one thing for a man to listen respectfully while someone holds forth, quite another [for a man] to get fucked” (274). Maus argues the music controls and fucks us. Just as there is an erotic charge produced through our fantasies of Say Wut?!, so is there a charge not just between Monkey and her man, but between them and us. We want to fuck, but we get fucked. Maus argues musical writing is a way to reverse listening as passive and feminine — to masculinize discourse in order to cover vulnerability and penetrability. We were listening *and* watching, our voyeuristic gaze is thoroughly supported at all levels of the social and therefore often occludes the possibilities of listener penetration. Saturated as we are in Moten’s “ocularcentric” mode, we might miss the potentiality of the aural. Since, unlike Maus’ example, this particular sonic moment is not made by either a man or a woman, but both, it makes fraught our own listener identity. The exchange between the two married beatboxers, on one level is voyeuristic as I described in my reading of the scene — it confirms our pleasure at a distance. On another level, it’s fraught for some in the audience who may be invested in heteronormative heterosexuality, interrupting our pleasure as it becomes difficult to settle on one erotic object because both are erotic objects — their sonic virtuosity makes that so and their conjoined musical experience makes it impossible to maintain rigid sexual identities based on a set idea of logical attachments.

Conclusion: The Possibility of the Liminal: Sonic interruption, transformed bodies

Victor Turner argued the liminal “persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space” (Turner, “Liminality and Communitas” 95). Liminality, according to Turner, is indexed by or likened to “death...] the womb...] invisibility...] darkness...] bisexuality...] wilderness” (95) among other symbols. These terms Turner uses to define the liminal also conjure up negative (darkness) or frightening (death, wilderness) associations for many. Others (bisexuality, the womb) shift in affective impact depending on the context, but are often considered simply places of gestation to usher one from one stage to another; they are not seen as site of their own meaning when not producing. The liminal space was the stage at La Mama on that balmy May night. The stage space did, in fact, transform the listeners, and hopefully the performers. Perhaps the audience went expecting to see women perform in a certain way, to maybe reaffirm in some corporatist inclusive way that women and their voices matter. We were transformed: our musical expectations, our gender and sexual subjectivities were interrupted, if only momentarily, our racial expectations and subjectivities were reworked and complicated by the prowess of women whose profiles did not comfortably fit the idealized black performing hip hop body, even as they followed in a genealogy of black performance. In this way, this very seemingly heteronormative and black normative sonic space (not La MaMa, of course, but the sonic legacy of beatboxing) was turned on its metaphoric ear, making possible through sonorous performance a way to disrupt the seemingly endless, immutable, and regressive categories of race, gender, and sexuality, which constantly are reified as real, even as their status as categories is a *mélange* of historical, social, physiological, and temporal constructs. As I noted in this paper’s introduction, sounding and resounding bodies and audiences can generate or reform the stability of racial, gender, and sexual identities, highlighting how these social positions are informed by tone, tenor, timbre, accent, inflection, rhythm, melody, and cadence. Sonic subjectivity indexes subject positions is rendered through and by sound; sonic subjectivity also plays with the subjectivity of identity and how its fluctuations are thrown into audible relief through sound. This does not mean the material reality and impact of racial, gender, and sexual categories get tossed out or erased through beatboxing, but rather by giving us a sonic pause and throwing into relief our own seduction into the authoritative legitimacy race, gender, and sexuality as immutable, this particular beatbox performance exposed the limitations of such thinking. My own quite palpable suspicions surrounding white bodies and hip hop art indexed anxieties at the material level in which white bodies “sounding” black are often promoted and hailed as musical and sonic geniuses, while the black bodies originated the performances are lost to history and denied similar fame. By focusing on what the sonic and the visual created as an ensemble, other worlds were made possible in that space: we got to revel, laugh, enjoy, and temporarily join together in aural language that resisted the formal syntax of spoken

language. We got to be irreverent, flirty, silly, non-violent, and transformed without being erased by conservative or liberal means of white, male and/or heterosexual de-historicizing. Whiteness, heterosexuality, and maleness didn't stop being systems of interlocking power, but I saw and heard that the beatboxing space at La Mama that night could create a new, critical sonic atmosphere in which new types of bodily configurations, racial, gender, and sexual, could arise, take shape, abide, and flourish through the exchange between performer and listener.

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Notes

1. Patrick McCreless gives a working definition of formalism as "the claim that the essence of any art resides in relationships of elements within an artistic work itself, not in relationships to anything outside that work. Recent historical accounts and reference works on aesthetics offer virtually the same definition." See: "Formalism, Fair and Foul," *The Music Issue*, *Nonsite.org*, Issue 8, (Winter 2012/2013): 6, accessed November 10, 2013, <http://nonsite.org/article/formalism-fair-and-foul> (<http://nonsite.org/article/formalism-fair-and-foul>).
2. As Danny Hoch writes in "Toward a Hip-Hop Aesthetic: A Manifesto for the Hip-Hop Arts Movement": "the consistent challenge has been to define not what hip-hop means as culture, but what hip-hop means as art — in fact, to make the case that hip hop *is* art" (2006, 349). Hoch delineates the aesthetics of four of hip hop elements: Graffiti, DJing, Rap, and B-Boying (Dance). Shannon McCabe (2011) notes hip hop has five elements: "dance (breaking, b-boying/b-girling, popping, locking), music (deejaying, beatboxing), poetics (emceeing, rapping), visual art (graffiti), and philosophy (knowledge, overstanding)" (95).
3. TyTe and White Noise, "Part 2: Old Skool: Introduction," *The Real History of Beatboxing: Part 2*, (September 29, 2009): np, accessed November 10, 2013, <http://www.humanbeatbox.com/forum/content.php?35-The-Real-History-of-Beatboxing-Part-2>.
4. Kid Lucky, via Skype, "Beatboxing and Beatrhyming," class presentation to "Hip Hop, Gender, and Sexuality," taught by Shanté Paradigm Smalls, Davidson College, Department of English, Davidson, NC, November 8, 2012.

5. For some recent work on sonic cartographies, see Walter S. Gershon, "Sonic Cartography: Mapping Space, Place, Race, and Identity in an Urban Middle School," *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* 13.1 (2013) and Karen Tongson's book-length project, *Relocations: Queer Suburban Imaginaries* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).
6. There is much writing about the intersection of gender/sex and race in relation to Black women, most famously, *But Some of Us Are Brave: All the Women are White, All the Men are Black: Black Women's Studies* (New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 1993). Current debates on Twitter have spurred hashtags like #solidarityisforwhitewomen (Mikki Kendall) and #blackpowerisforblackmen (Jamilah Lemieux), pointing to the ways Black women are still made invisible in gender and race politics. In recounting the great debates between black female and male scholars about the categories of "race" and "woman," Margaret Homans contends, "Although these different debates about difference took different aspects of the body as synecdoches for it, their historical coincidence produced a contested question: what meaning does the difference between those two debates about the body have — the former dominated by black men, the latter by white women — when the subject is the bodies of African American women?" (77). See: "'Racial Composition': Metaphor and the Body in the Writing of Race," *Female Subjects in Black and White*, eds. Elizabeth Abel, Barbara Christian, Helen Moglen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)
7. "Say Wut: American Human Beatbox Festival 2011," YouTube video, 17:02, posted by TheBeatboxqueen, May 21, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gD5D2Y5Xs4A>
8. Any Google search for beatboxers results in pages of links and images of male beatboxers around the globe. Sometime, Butterscotch (Antoinette Clinton) will appear on lists of American beatboxers. For more about women, technology, and hip hop, see Tricia Rose's chapter, "Soul Sonic Forces: Technology, Orality, and Black Cultural Practice in Rap Music," in *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).
9. Also referred to as a "click track," this is a metronome or other recording used to help musicians keep time during the recording or editing process.
10. Part of this this has to do with the way that whiteness, rhythm, sound, and dance has been set up as anti-thetical in the US. For more on this, see Thaddeus Russell's chapter "A Rhythmless Nation," in his book, *A Renegade History of the United States* (Free Press, 2010).
11. Mark Anthony Neal, "White Chocolate Soul: Teena Marie and Lewis Taylor," in *Listen Again: A Momentary History of Pop Music*, ed. Eric Weisbard (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 25-258.

12. John L. Jackson, Jr., *Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 15, as quoted in Neal "White Chocolate," 258.

13. See: Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetic of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 18.

14. *Ibid*, 235.

15. For recent work on the uses of performative blackness in hip hop, see Nitasha Tamar Sharma's *Hip Hop Desis: South Asian Americans, Blackness, and a Global Racial Consciousness* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010) and Antonio Tiongson Jr.'s *Filipinos Represent: DJs, Racial Authenticity, and the Hip-Hop Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

16. "Lucky Monkey, Women of the 5th Element," American Human Beatbox Festival, YouTube, 0:41, posted by JustJessP, June 30, 2011.

17. For more on queering the phallus, see Jan Campell's chapter, "Queering the Phallus," in *Arguing with the Phallus: Feminist, Queer, and Postcolonial Theory: A Psychoanalytic Contribution* (London and New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

Preservations of Silence in the Queer Archive

Andy Ditzler

Note: headphones must be used in order to hear the recording's binaural effect.

00:00

12:01

On a limited-edition vinyl recording, one can hear musician Drew Daniel of the group Matmos coming out to his parents via telephone.^[1] Daniel's vulnerability is palpable from the trembling in his voice, though he gets right to the subject. Crucially however, we hear only Daniel's side of the conversation. In the gaps when his parents are speaking, we hear no voices at all, allowing the ambient sound of Daniel's room to come into play. When Daniel is not talking, there is a consistent sound which I take to be him fumbling with some object near the microphone — an index of his nervousness, which is then transferred to the listener. This brief, touching recording ends with a sudden change of subject. Daniel is beginning to explain why he has chosen this moment to come out; then, hearing something on the other end of the line that we cannot, he asks his parents, "What is that sound?" The track ends here, and the needle moves to the center of the record.

For us, that sound is silence. But it is not a silence that equals death, nor is it the "hush of the archive," Charles Morris's evocative metaphor for the elision of queer materials from historical research (147). Instead, in Drew Daniel's recording, the spaces left by silence suggest ways in which incomplete conversations and elided narratives allow for empathetic and embodied experiences of queer history and memory. I will here describe my own recording of an incomplete story, in order to suggest the possibilities of preserving productive silences in queer archives.

A main trope of gay historiography is that of making visible what was previously "hidden from history," to use the title of a prominent anthology of gay historical writings. The very first sentence of *Gay American History*, Jonathan Ned Katz's 1976 anthology of primary sources, neatly condenses this trope by conjoining sight and sound: "We have been the silent minority, the silenced minority — invisible women, invisible men" (1). Developed alongside this process of archival discovery was the "coming out" narrative of post-Stonewall activism which cast public self-identification as queer as a vocal and visual act.

More recent historical accounts, foregrounding the private or semi-public informal queer networks of communication throughout the twentieth century, suggest a precedent for queer oral history in an historically elusive “word of mouth.” From what Stuart Loomis terms “the wisdom of the aunties” in the intergenerational social milieu of American gay men in the 1930s to the sexual networks gay men and lesbians developed during World War II, to the coded visual and verbal messages gay men used to signal interest in one another in 1920s and 1930s urban centers, to the often imaginative folklore regarding such figures as Oscar Wilde, Walt Whitman and Shakespeare, queer people were already communicating vital information, including their own histories, between one another.^[2] An interface between the pre-Stonewall era, in which oral histories and verbal communications were largely coded, ephemeral, and underground, and the post-Gay Liberation era, in which they were explicit and archived, is a useful model to consider how we might imagine different functions for archival materials in queer memory and history.^[3]

In this spirit, the queer archive has become a focus of the work of artists, many of whom seek to dislodge archival items from material fixity and linear narratives. Ann Cvetkovich details lesbian artists’ “counterarchive” — a radical use of archival materials not only to bring hidden stories into the open but to critique the archive itself (32-35). Since 2009, E.G. Crichton — the first Artist-in-Residence at the San Francisco GLBT Historical Society — has produced the project *Lineage: Matchmaking in the Archive*, matching artists with particular archival subjects. Crichton’s linking of a “lineage” between present-day artists and historical subjects combined with the affective intimacy of “matchmaking” delineates a space for discovering and describing modes of queer life that are not commonly produced in the archive.

In April 2010, as part of the collective John Q, I co-presented *Memory Flash*, a one-day series of public events. Out of our archival research, we presented re-enactments or reconstitutions of four events relating to queer life in Atlanta in the 1950s and 1960s, in the spaces where they originally happened. The first of these events centered on a story told by artist Freddie Styles, contained in the Atlanta History Center’s collection of oral histories of pre-1970 queer life in Atlanta.

In this story, Styles talks of the Jolly 12, an informal social club of black gay men formed in the early 1960s, when Styles was a teenager. This group of twelve men would meet socially in a house on Wabash Avenue in the Old Fourth Ward neighborhood of Atlanta. When they left the house to go to a club, the men (all uniformly dressed in white shirt and blue pants) would line up by height and march down the street. As the men were familiar figures in the neighborhood, residents would banter with them from their porches and windows. As part of the group of older men, the precocious teenaged Styles learned from the “quick defensive wit” of the men’s public responses (Chenault et al). As the first “movement” of *Memory Flash*, Styles stood in the front yard of the original house on Wabash Avenue and told an expanded version

of this story, relating an oral history of his queer youth to the audience. While Freddie spoke, John Q, along with invited members of the community, slowly circled the crowd, dressed in white shirts and blue pants, recreating the original Jolly 12 walk. When Styles finished his story, he joined in with the walkers, completing a historical circle. While Freddie drew on the story he related concisely in his official oral history, his performance of it in *Memory Flash* was more discursive, nonlinear, and evocative.

During the events of *Memory Flash*, I wore a recorder — a microphone in each ear, going to a small portable minidisc recorder in my pocket. The microphones look like “earbud” style earphones and are unobtrusive visually. They create binaural recordings — different from stereo recordings in that the design of the two microphones, and their placement on either side of the head, create an audio document that locates the recording subject in the space of the recorded event. (In this sense, the person recording is not only the recorder but a subject as well. Thus, I refer to the person recording here as the “recording subject.”) This creates an immersive effect when listening back with headphones; often, listeners to binaural field recordings can mistake sounds on the recording for sounds that are taking place in their present moment. In this way, binaural recording creates a more subjective record of the recording subject’s experience of an event. It documents *movement* of the recording subject as well. In addition to drawing on the trope of silence in “the hush of the archive,” Charles Morris reflects on the potential of the archive for “*queer movement*: traversal of time and space, mobilization and circulation of meanings that trouble sexual normalcy and its discriminations” (147-48). His use of movement is metaphorical; via my portable field recordings of *Memory Flash*, I would like for a moment to extend this movement literally, into the streets, and into those historical social movements — Civil Rights and Gay Liberation — that are the context of Freddie Styles’ experience in the Old Fourth Ward.

As Freddie told his story that April day for a large crowd gathered on Wabash Avenue, I began the Jolly 12 walk around the circle, slowly at first, gaining momentum as the other marchers gradually fell in step behind me. Freddie expanded his story of the Jolly 12, contextualizing it in his larger development as an out gay teen in the neighborhood in the early 1960s. He spoke of a wide variety of familial and intimate relations — from a grandmother who was “shacking up” with a man to one of his own early affairs with an older man, to being “promised to the doorman” by older friends at gay clubs. Freddie’s talk of trysts and shacking up, delivered into a microphone in the front yard of a house with relatives and friends gathered to listen, in the same block where much of this happened, constitutes a temporary intervention — a lovely and ironic “counterarchive” to the elision of sexuality from so much archival work.

This embodied aspect of Freddie’s story is one way to frame my own recording of the event. I had decided to run the recorder constantly; I was interested in capturing liminal moments as well as the main events of *Memory Flash*. Here I found an analog to queer history, as

interstitial moments and spaces are often where queer people thrived historically. I was also influenced by Andy Warhol and other 1960s/1970s filmmakers whose style depended not on editing but on letting the camera run for the full length of the film roll, as well as by the composer John Cage's interest in nonintentionality and acceptance of all sounds. So the recorder was turned on at the beginning of the event, and remained on even when there was (supposedly) "nothing to hear." I thought perhaps I would catch Freddie's story as I was walking, preserving an oral history on the run, as it were. But something else happened.

Our Jolly 12 circular walk took us past Freddie, up the street a bit, then across the street and back up, crossing the street again and moving back to Freddie to begin another circle. Thus, as Freddie spoke I moved toward and away from him with the recorder. At the furthest point of the circle from Freddie, he is completely out of earshot. So the recording is a record of his voice fading in and out — a story fragmented.

The resulting recorded document presents a paradox: in re-enacting Freddie's walk, I missed his story of it. This quality of the recording captures the sense in which Freddie's story is one I may never be able to truly hear, just as our 2010 version of the Jolly 12 could not be like the original. Instead, this is a recording of a space where a story from long ago is being re-told. Fading in and out, graspable in some spots and not in others, it acts like a memory. It brings forward the other sounds of the space: airplanes, barking dogs, sirens, children playing. It brings in other senses too: an imaginative visual relationship to the space, a sense of *movement* through it. It dramatizes what Scott Bravmann calls "queer fictions of the past," which "like all representations... are *partial* perspectives...both incomplete and value-laden, telling us something but not everything about the world and doing so at a certain cost" (32). It tells us how history becomes (imperfect) memory, how memory becomes a reconstruction, and how the body is an archive of, and in, movement.

Silence is the method for these lessons — specifically, the queer silence of John Cage. As Jonathan D. Katz notes, Cage's silence (as exemplified in his key work *4'33"*, in which no sounds are intentionally produced by the performer) is *performative*. This silence, far from passive, is deeply ironic and subversive, being at once political and aesthetic. The silence produced by Cage's nonintention contains not only surrender but a subtle resistance. Its resistance is in its relocation of music to the act of listening rather than composing, making the listener aware of his or her own role in the process and refuting authoritative forms of musical discourse. It is "not another kind of music but a challenge to the construction of music itself." By extension, silence contains a surrender in that it is an "oppositional mode that refuses articulated oppositionality" (57). This refusal of explicit opposition to authority, while offering resistance that challenges authority's very ground, aligns with the subversive potential of the closet as a performative mode of communicating what could not explicitly be said. For Cage, direct political protest carried the danger of being "absorbed into the flow of power" (Cage, *For the Birds* 236 qtd. in Katz 60), while in

his composing he aligned himself with noise, as “noises escape power, that is the laws of counterpoint and harmony.” Therefore, silence for Cage was, like his ambivalent use of the closet, a performance: an intentional refusal of authority which made use of materials and ideas that were outside authority’s realm. As Cage put it in his *Lecture on Nothing*: “I have nothing to say / and I am saying it” (*Silence* 109).

Cage’s silence points as well to something different from gay culture’s metaphor of silence as death, as abjection, loneliness, and denial. Nino Rodriguez’s video work *Identities* is a forceful challenge to this dominant view. After taping an oral history interview with Thomas Padgett, a man living with HIV, Rodriguez edited out all of Padgett’s words, leaving us with only the moments between speech. As Padgett breaks down emotionally, yet is still denied language, we experience something closer to an emotional trajectory rather than a narrative. A moving, powerful work of empathy, *Identities* audaciously plays off the stereotype of the isolated, silent, and powerless “AIDS victim” to question whether all silences do, in fact, equal death. Its careful editing diverges from the nonintention of Cage’s work, but in subjecting an oral history to a strict aesthetic process, and then accepting the result, *Identities* exemplifies a Cagean silence.

So, I hope, does my recording of Freddie Styles’ story. I hope the circular path toward and away from this story makes room for a silence that will tell us something about queer memory and history. I hope that my own movement through the space of the story — as part of a Jolly 12 not much like the original — will help preserve not the telling of a story but the hearing of it, in the in-between spaces where queer people thrive. This recording preserves not an oral history but a “word of mouth” which can, I hope, enter into play with Freddie’s pointed inclusion of his sexuality in the public space of his story. Preserving these unruly relations, bringing the archive into life, can help us bring a different kind of silence into the archive.

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Note, n.d.

Notes

1. The recording, titled "Phonecall," is the final track on side one of the record Family Audio, released by the Lucky Kitchen label in 1998.

2. John Loughery, *The Other Side of Silence: Men's Lives and Gay Identities: A Twentieth Century History* (New York: H. Holt, 1998), 73; John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 23-31; George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 187-190.

3. For more on this model, see Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 9.

Invisible People (A Radio Opera)

Yvette Janine Jackson

00:00

28:17

Invisible People (A Radio Opera) is a series of site-specific performance-compositions confronting queer black identity. The radio opera concept was instigated after hearing John Cage's *The City Wears a Slouch Hat* in the mid-nineties and developed after subsequent years of experience as a composer and sound designer for theatre and radio drama. Composer Anthony Davis challenged me to develop an opera based on a socio-political topic, which drew me to two arenas: the responses from African American communities in reaction to President Obama's announcement in support of marriage equality and blogs contrasting the underreported deaths of Sakia Gunn, Shani Baraka, and Rayshon Holmes to the media coverage devoted to the murders of Matthew Shepard, Brandon Teena, and Gwen Araujo.

The notion to create a linear narrative with *Invisible People* was abandoned early on. The libretto is derived from found texts from a variety of sources including historic speeches, sermons, news articles, and online postings. Its modular and improvisational framework permits the length, order, and meaning to be easily modified thereby rendering a new performance from each iteration. Self-interrogation motivated me to explore how identity could be manifest through sound.

Prologue to Invisible People (A Radio Opera) and *Invisible People (A Radio Opera), Act I, Scene 1* were performed in 2012 as tape pieces intended to be played at an uncomfortable volume in a complete blackout. In Spring 2013, *Invisible People (A Radio Opera), Deliverance: Episode 1* included projection and live trumpet improvisation. All three events were held in the Experimental Theater of the Conrad Prebys Music Center at UC San Diego. Although darkness and silence are integral to the work, Space4Art in San Diego will host the staged premiere of *Invisible People (A Radio Opera)* on September 27, 2013 as part of the Glottalopticon Outdoor Experimental Opera Series.

Whistlin' Dixie

Meredith Heil

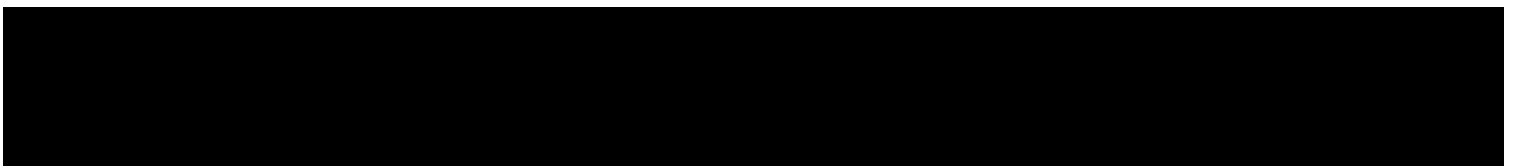
Artist Statement

Many youth in the US come of age flipping through TV channels or scouring the internet in search of queer life. They are eventually drawn out of their small towns and into the “gay ghettos” of New York or San Francisco, motivated by a lack of queer visibility in their own hometown. *Whistlin' Dixie*, however, seeks out folks at the forefront of the Southern queer music scene — living examples that queer community can thrive in these previously written off country roads and postindustrial cities. This documentary showcases these communities and examines their influences, challenges and motivations while putting a face on what it means to be queer, young and Southern.

Each stop on the road provides new characters, scenes, and sounds, tracking the lives of queer musicians and activists from North Carolina to Kentucky. On screen, these characters articulate their unique coming out processes, ties to family history and investments in producing a more tolerant and politically progressive South. These testimonies help convey just how vital queer community is in the South and how these artists are working to insure its future.

Growing up queer in a series of small, suburban towns all over the US, I have always been drawn to creative means of forming queer community. I was inspired to make *Whistlin' Dixie* after witnessing both the beauty of the South, the strength of its queer music scene and the region's lack of academic and social visibility within the larger queer population. Many people I've talked to, from California to New York, were completely unaware that queers even existed in the South. I wanted to open people's eyes and change their minds by proving that queer community is not only possible, but can thrive outside of the big metropolitan areas that dot our coasts.

Whistlin' Dixie



I STAND IN RUINS BEHIND YOU: QUEER TACTICS OF NOISE

Daniel J Sander

TALK ABOUT THE PASSION JUST LIKE MINE

You see, what, what sounds to you like a big load of trashy old noise ... is in fact ... the brilliant music of a genius ... myself. And that music is so powerful, that it's quite beyond my control. And, ah ... when I'm in the grips of it, I don't feel pleasure and I don't feel pain, either physically or emotionally. Do you understand what I'm talking about? Have you ever, have you ever felt like that? When you just, when you just, you couldn't feel anything, and you didn't want to either. You know, like that? Do you understand what I'm saying, sir?

— *Iggy Pop*

After all, you know that noise murders thought.

— *Friedrich Nietzsche*

I am interested in what Pop describes here as "trashy old noise." More, in how it sounds to "you" like that, implying that it does not sound like that to others, others who presumably recognize it for "the brilliant music of a genius." Further, I am interested in the self-annihilating feeling of "when you just, you couldn't feel anything, and you didn't want to either." Something about this noise and something about this feeling is not only murderous of feeling and thought, but also queer. It is to an exploration of this something that I turn. What is this feeling of not feeling? Perhaps it is one of difference, not in terms of a difference of representation, but in terms of a difference of reverberation, of echo and decay — a dynamic, machinic, neutral, inorganic feeling. How does this feeling sound, or resound; that is, how do we listen to it?

My exploration takes the form of the following interrogative chiasmus: What is queer about noise and what is noisy about queerness? I ask these questions to put pressure on the assignation of sensory and affective effects to discrete forms of aesthetic media. This pressure extends noise beyond music and toward a queer practice that, like Pop's 'brilliant music of a genius,' is, in the words of the Damned, "for heroes" and "drowns out ... godly words."

I begin by suggesting the contours of what I mean to index in the concepts of queerness and noise. I then situate my discussion within an aesthetic history of music. Doing so allows me to account for the emergence of a few different musical approaches to noise. Finally, I listen to Foreigner's 1984 power ballad "I Want to Know What Love Is (IW2KWLII)" as it is mutilated beyond the bounds of its origin — specifically, as it appears in the 1998 movie *Fucking Åmål* (*Show Me Love*) and, subsequently, as it is re-vocalized in songs by the bands Julie Ruin and Mi Ami. Less than ascribing a fixed queer identity (neither an auditory reflection nor an ideological hailing) to any of its subsequent articulations (conceptualized as neither cover songs nor samples), I am more interested in the movement and accumulation of a feeling of queer-becoming in, out, and through the terrain of the song as it circulates; a movement of dissolution, distortion, and intensification; a repetition differentiated through queer resonances; less a homosexuality and more what Drew Daniels has described as a sonosexuality (333). The song becomes a sticky site for an affective economy of queerness, which builds and differentiates itself noisily from its basis in love. Likewise, rather than ascribing to noise a certain set of sounds, or even a genre of music, I instead listen to the promiscuity and perversion of a song-text as it becomes noisy. This course of action is taken and followed not necessarily in order to arrive at any tidy conclusions, but rather to sketch some of the interventionist tactics and potentialities into/of music that I listen to being performed in the noise of the sites that I visit.

Echoing Susan Sontag's suggestion that "in place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art," I argue that noise can provide us with one such erotics, and it can do so queerly ("Against Interpretation" 14). I do so by first describing the musical field in which noise emerges. It is one of transcendent (but not transcendental) aesthetic experience. For Arthur Schopenhauer, music is the ideal vehicle for aesthetic transcendence because it operates on the same mathematical principles as nature while at the same time avoiding being representative of anything in nature. The composer, like the philosopher, conveys her superior knowledge of the world by obeying the rules of music and thereby offers us heightened and intuitive aural perceptions in which we are temporarily sonically freed from the particularity of our own individual willing.

Just as Schopenhauer hierarchizes the fine arts in toto, so too does he hierarchize different elements within music, aligning bass notes with inorganic materiality and rhythm with lay happiness. The idea that as human subjects we should ascend with music away from the

bass/base and toward the soprano participates in a restricted economy of the number that neglects the excess of the sensible and thereby sensual world. I pose noise as the sonic component of this excess. Locating noise here places it within the cosmic energetics of what Georges Bataille calls general economy. The general economy of eroticism spatializes noise outside the confines of the perceiving subject and specifically in sub-urban spaces. Karen Tongson, for example, has identified the racialized queer aesthetics and sociabilities afforded by the sprawl of Los Angeles' suburbia. Noise in the sub-urbs resonates beyond signification (Nancy, *Listening* 31). The queer performance of noise in such spaces does not attempt to overcome ineptitude or recuperate noise toward any specific useful ends, but sacrifices itself to the waste of codified music, both generating and enduring interminable obscurity in the process.

Queerness works for me throughout as socio-symbolic stigma. Anatomically and botanically, as a small spot, mark, scar, minute hole, or apex, queer stigma is a social register of aberrant sexual identities and, more often than not, those between and among same-sexed bodies. Stigma, in this sense, echoes Erving Goffman's deployment of the term to describe "individuals dealing with social disqualification" (Love 187). I retain this echo in order to acknowledge the persistent problematics posed by positionality and identity. While I lean on work in which queerness is figured as resistance within an identitarian framework, like that of Tongson, I do not reduce the work of queerness to queer identities -- gendered, sexualized, racialized, classed, and/or otherwise. Instead, while seemingly oppositional, I layer identitarian queer studies and nonrepresentational affect theory as a heuristic in the present analysis, granting ontological priority to the affect of the latter. The irreducibility of queerness to identity comes from the ability that its social register has to radically negate the status quo in which it is encountered. Queerness figured as such is more of a *doing* than a *being*. In the context of the work of Bataille and his development of a base materialism, which I read below alongside the work of Schopenhauer, the indissociability of queerness and stigma can be thought of in terms of sacrificial mutilation, pertinently evidenced in Vincent Van Gogh's severed ear, wherein queerness performs "the rupture of personal homogeneity and the projection *outside the self* of a part of oneself" (68). This is, I think, what Pop experiences as beyond his control whence in the grips of "trashy old noise": the noise cuts him queerly in such a way that he is projected beyond interior and privatized feeling. Further, and more generally, the stigmatizing cut of queerness — the cut of possibility that allows one "to feel the growth of new margins" (Hayward 72), the cut evidenced in such feminist performance as Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece*, Valerie Solanas' *SCUM Manifesto*, and The Slits' *Cut* — is one that is encountered throughout the course of the present paper, from the jump cut to cut music to cut men.

Within this context of queerness, and to transition to noise, the cut can also be construed as an ethic of listening (as different from hearing/understanding). This is how Jean-Luc Nancy describes listening: "To be listening is to be inclined toward the opening of meaning,

hence to a slash, a cut in un-sensed [*in-sensée*] indifference at the same time as toward a reserve that is anterior and posterior to any signifying punctuation" (*Listening* 27). For music, too, like queerness, can be accessed through such a doubling as produced by a cut. On the one hand, it can be read, from the local level of a textual analysis of a particular piece of music's lyrics (if it has them) to a more global one, wherein the music is read to be indicative of the time and place in which it was produced and of the social changes that it forecasts. On the other hand, music, as an aesthetic form particular to the sense of listening, resounds with irreducible aspects that, while being in the midst and constitutive of those that allow for its reading, at the same time, resists and exceeds them. These aspects of music are those that I label noise. This is noise in the general sense of something, that thing, that interferes both in the midst of signifying communication and as it is produced by signifying communication as surplus. Noise, then, describes both a sonic sense and a social one; the two of which, while they can be parsed for the purposes of discussion, are never really extricable.

Noise, as such, recalls Jacques Attali's political economy of music — one where noise is an agent of violence, a weapon, and the emergence of music marks the move to socially contain that weapon — globally, through numerical codification and standardization and locally, through the historical orders of ritual sacrifice, representation, and repetition. Similar moves can be traced across the arts more broadly, moves in which objects are trafficked in different social contexts, from religious to monarchical to capitalist. While Attali's project is committed to studying the various historical ways in which noise is reigned in by music and subsequently becomes subservient to these economies, my orientation is more toward the gaps that emerge between Attali's historical socioeconomic orders of music, wherein noise always already threatens to undo them and indeed does undo them at times of social upheaval. In this way, the economy of noise I consider is general in Bataille's sense: the energy of noise always necessarily exceeds musical order. Attali identifies what I am invoking as noise as "a subversive strain of music [...], subterranean and pursued, [...] an instrument of the ecstatic cult, an outburst of uncensored violence", and, significantly for this consideration, in a reference to Montesquieu, explicitly links it to homosexuality (13). Both noise and homosexuality elicit control for they evoke "a passion that ought to be proscribed by all nations" (Montesquieu qtd. in Attali 13). I propose that we think this linkage more expansively as not to homosexuality, but to queerness. Such a passion can be thought beyond specific same-sex material intimacies if considered aesthetically. Aesthetic passion, as opposed to the desire commonly evoked under the banner of homosexuality, points to the excessiveness of noise. Passion possesses, and it does so gratuitously.

My procession from the above intersecting lines necessarily belies noise and queerness, and if there are aspects to both that celebrate failure, then my exploration, too, partakes of this. By this, I mean the following two things: 1. Noise and queerness articulated and encountered within academic discourse do not perform in the same way as they do incarnate,

i.e. from a live(d) and/or recorded broadcast wherein subject and object confront each other, if not more directly, then at least less reflexively. That is, generating and listening to noise is one thing, while understanding and conveying noise is another: "Noise is fundamentally betrayed by trying to understand it[...] To think about [noise] is about missing the mark, speculating, imposing, and distorting — all of which are in tune with [noise itself]" (Hegarty 157). As such, my case is made more strongly by the perverse permutations of "IW2KWL I" themselves, which brings me to the second reason why writing about queerness and noise is bound to failure: 2. Distortion results not only in the act of thinking itself, but also in my myopia as a fanatic of these sites, "for no one who wholeheartedly shares in a given sensibility can analyze it; he can only, whatever his intention, exhibit it" (Sontag, "Notes on Camp" 276). The failure of this paper to engage a coherent analysis of noise and queerness, then, is evidence of the exhibition of the sensibilities of noise and queerness.

Distortion, then, is one component of noise and queerness that points to the impenetrability of my sites of analysis; another is transience. If, after Attali, noise is something that is "subterranean and pursued", then my engagement with noise and queerness is a fugitive one. If I am at all able to touch on these concepts, then it is a pressing that just as soon sends them off running again. I persist in this pursuit as an act that both undoes (reigns in and tames) and redoes (confuses and libidinizes) the work that these concepts do.

A final preliminarily point at which noise and queerness intersect for me is in the literature on noise music itself. As is the case with many other histories, queerness is the ghost that haunts the history of noise music. For, while many of noise's practitioners were/are queer, the criticism and analysis tends not to address this and instead concentrates more on the abstractions to which noise lends itself, threatening to erase noise as a practice by displacing its subjects. I do not mean to suggest that a greater emphasis on artists' biographies is needed or that all instantiations of noise are queer (far from it), but that the way in which noise has been written about reflects the heteronormativity of the discourses in which it circulates. The logic that typically underlies this heteronormativity in terms of aesthetic practices is that to locate and address, through discussion, the persistent presence of queerness is to limit both the art itself and its attendant audience. I contend, however, that the erotic of queerness is an expansive and ever-mutating one.

THE AIMLESS NOISE OF BAD MUSIC

Having proffered some preliminary and introductory thoughts on what queerness and noise do and how they work and (mis)behave in this paper, I now think about noise as something anathema to music insofar as music has been writ in a western philosophical discourse that historically hierarchizes aesthetic forms. My point of reference here is Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory as presented in his work *The World as Will and Representation* and Nancy's subsequent interpretation of Schopenhauer in his work on listening. Schopenhauer's thought

emerges shortly after the early modern period in which the autonomy of music is established (Hegarty 7),^[1] and both distills and criticizes much of the thought that precedes it (e.g. the *Critiques* of Immanuel Kant) as it foreshadows revolutions in thinking to come (e.g. those propagated by Friedrich Nietzsche). Nancy locates in Schopenhauer's will "the passage from a plastic and poetic paradigm to a musical paradigm[...] that is to say, being as desire rather than being as reason" (*Listening* 53). Schopenhauer's attention to music, then, marks not only a project of philosophical inquiry, but also a historical paradigm shift from regimes of cosmological and representational fixity in which music reveals something of a fundamental truth to a time in which music's power is not one of revelation but of the generation and control of affect itself.

For Schopenhauer, "aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful consists, to a large extent, in the fact that, when we enter the state of pure contemplation, we are raised for the moment above all willing, above all desires and cares; we are, so to speak, rid of ourselves" (390). Though particular wills are decidedly never freed permanently, contemplation of the universal condition of willing is a temporary freedom. The work that inspires this contemplation is divisible into familiar categories, but in a hierarchical order that corresponds to categories of the will. These gradations from the lowest to the highest are as follows: inorganic matter, plants, animals, and humans, and respectively architecture, painting, sculpture, and verbal arts (most saliently, theatre). Music exists both at the top of and at a remove from this hierarchy. Its peculiarity lies in that, of the arts, it is perceived most directly, i.e. because it does not index the world as/of representation, but presents the world as willing per se, it is perceived without the intermediaries of the Platonic Ideas. Music unsettles a sensory hierarchy based on representation, for which visuality would be supreme. This hearkens to Nancy's location of a musical paradigm emergent in Schopenhauer where music disrupts (and in so doing gains aesthetic supremacy) any verifiable correlation between an object and its representation. While noise shares in the unreasonability and nonrepresentationality Nancy identifies in Schopenhauer's musical paradigm, it does not do so in the same way that music does for Schopenhauer.

This is because Schopenhauer's explanation of music as the universal language and as the only art form to be found in heaven is one that upholds the music and conventions of the common practice period. As such, the way in which music as the supreme art form enacts aesthetic perception is through four-part harmony's derivation from the natural world, as was first illustrated by Pythagoras' demonstration of the arithmetic of musical intervals. Music, then, expresses not only the world, but also the rules that govern it: "Its form can be reduced to quite definite rules expressible in numbers, from which it cannot possibly depart without entirely ceasing to be music" (Schopenhauer 256). The aurality of music combined with its generation based on rules allegedly observable in the sensual world contribute to the notion that it exists in a parallel universe accessible through aesthetic contemplation.

Within these rules, Schopenhauer goes on to make a correspondence between the categorizations of the will and harmony, such that inorganic matter, plants, animals, and humans are to be heard in the bass, tenor, alto, and soprano respectively. The interplay and resolution of dissonance into consonance of these sounds through harmony and rhythm is what compromises the aesthetic form of music. It is still not noise, though, for the following two reasons of interest to me: 1. Noise and its practitioners know not of the appropriate end, utility, or purpose of music. This end is the temporary transcendence of a subject's individual willing. Noise does not achieve the status of music, or retains the status of bad music, because it remains arbitrary: "An arbitrary playing with the means of art without proper knowledge of the end is in every art the fundamental characteristic of bungling. Such bungling shows itself in the supports that carry nothing, in the purposeless volutes, prominences, and projections of bad architecture, in the meaningless runs and figures together with *the aimless noise of bad music*" (Schopenhauer 2, 408, emphasis mine). 2. In the above quotation and elsewhere, Schopenhauer, who acknowledges receipt of it from Goethe, makes an analogy between music at the top of his hierarchy and architecture at its base — as architecture is the symmetrical division of space, music is the rhythmic division of time. The less controlled by rhythm a piece of music is, the more "analogous to the ruin divested of symmetry" (454).

While Schopenhauer is quick to emphasize that this relationship between music and space is solely analogous and only applies to divisions of time and space, that music should assert its special place at this time is important, for this establishment is concomitant with the differentiation and privatization of space: "With indoor living, two things developed antonymously: the high art of music and noise pollution — for noises were the sounds that were kept outside" (Schafer 35 qtd. in Hegarty 7). Noise, then, comes to be seen as not only aligned with the ruin, but also, for reasons that I address below, other excised negative spaces, such as, in Bataille's terms, the cemetery and slaughterhouse and, in my terms, suburban spaces — spaces on the sides of roads, in closets, and on dance floors. Noise, moreover, as sound does have a spatial quality that extends beyond analogy in that it names the space of reverberation between a surface from which sounds issue and a surface on which they are recorded. Figured this way, the space of noise is not only like a ruin, but also capable of being physically ruinous when an intensity of sound deteriorates the hearing sensitivity of a particular species' aural receptors. Combining a few of the threads I have just set loose above, noise, as it is approached through Schopenhauer, does not transcend individual willing and, as such, employs the rules of music ineptly. The arbitrariness and incompetence of noise is spatialized not only because sound in general exists as a wave in space, but also because the categories of music and noise are differentiated and consolidated spatially, such that sound that is produced and appreciated indoors is qualified as music and thereby designates what remains outside and threatens coming in as noise.

At this point, I consider Foreigner's original performance of "IW2KWLI" in conjunction with the video that accompanied the song in 1984 and then juxtapose this with another video, a scene from director Lukas Moodysson's 1998 movie *Show Me Love*. This juxtaposition highlights the way in which noise is kept or, in the latter case, kicked outside.

Unlike the aimlessness of noise, Foreigner's version of the song relies on a traditional dramatic structure that builds toward a destination, expending energy in order to reach a point, and successfully aspires for normative success, as in the first vocal line of the second verse, "This mountain I must climb." While the lyrics themselves remain gender and sex neutral, the video that accompanies the song predictably climaxes with a woman leaping into the lead singer's arms. The narrative of the song is mirrored in both its commercial success, the way it too climbs the charts, and in the video for the song. In the video, the band enters the studio alone; dominates its interior, private, and privileged space; and invites the incidental and racially Othered New Jersey Mass Choir in to sing on the track. The choir encircles and encloses, yet stands outside, the band, and most prominently the lead singer, performing a kind of double interiorization. All this before the aforementioned leap signifies the close of the song as the lead singer's arms enclose the woman. Musically, the song follows a similar arc, building slowly from the rhythm line of a smooth bass synth and drums and crescendoing with the addition of voices whose place at the forefront of the song is never without certainty.

The first perversion of "IW2KWLI" I visit occurs in director Lukas Moodysson's 1998 movie, *Show Me Love*, in which two adolescent girls fall for each other in the small Swedish town of Åmål. The movie initially performs its noisiness through its original title, *Fucking Åmål*, which consternated public officials of the town who feared a threat to their economy (Griffiths 29). The scene in which "IW2KWLI" is heard, though, is one that finds the girls, Agnus and Elin, attempting to escape Åmål's confines as they hitchhike en route to Stockholm. This already departs from Foreigner's video, which traces not a movement from the country to the city, but from the city to the studio. Diegetic sound muffles the opening verses of the song as the pair makes arrangements with the driver, but when he leaves temporarily to attend to his car that will not start, the girls engage in a consummating kiss that is concomitant with the explosion of the song's chorus. This scene not only changes the sexual orientations and ages of the lovers who enact the song, but also makes their necking neither the resolution of their story, nor of the song. Rather, the very high point of the song's chorus is interrupted as the driver catches glimpse of what transpires inside and evacuates Agnus and Elin who, in an extra layer of queerness, he has been led to believe are sisters. After screaming, "What on earth are you up to?" the man abandons the girls on the side of the road that they took to in pursuit of a better future. Instead, they are squandered in erotic coupling.

Show Me Love re-orientes "IW2KWLI" away from the fulfillment of adult contemporary heterosexuality and toward an unfulfilled adolescent queerness. Rather than being incorporated into a private and privileged interior space, Agnus and Elin are ejected, rejected, dejected, and abjected^[2] to the drizzly roadside on which we initially encounter them, no longer hopeful of an escape route to Stockholm as the big city location of a better future. The tradeoff, or consolation prize, is that what in Foreigner's video comes off as an almost platonic embrace, here, becomes an embarrassingly passionate kiss.

THE MELANCHOLIC NOISE OF THE LIVING TOMB AND THE RUIN OF JULIE RUIN

If we glean from these videos how music has come to function in relation to noise as a space of bungling, then how does this space function? As mentioned above (and in a temporal register that differs in emphasis from my current spatial one), Attali hears noise as a threatening sound anterior to its social sanctioning. However, as noise persists throughout the orders he locates in history, then it is also sometimes posterior to them. This is what lends noise its quality of prophecy, for it foreshadows the socio-historical order that will arise to contain it (19).^[3]

Noise is present and persistent in society as a musical form for which society is yet to have a register. As such, the temporality of noise is a melancholic one and suggests a certain spatialization. As Judith Butler has described, "Walter Benjamin remarks that melancholy spatializes, and that its effort to reverse or suspend time produces 'landscapes' as its signature effect. One might profitably read the Freudian topography that melancholy occasions as precisely such a spatialized landscape of the mind" (*The Psychic Life of Power* 174). Noise read as a melancholic space that both saturates and exceeds the time in which it is occasioned can too be read as queer with recourse to a specific psychic topography analyzed by Butler, namely that of Antigone. Antigone is queered by the tangled lines of kinship from which she emerges and which she continues to produce. Here I posit noise as structurally homologous to the social death that Butler describes in her reading of Antigone: "In confronting the unspeakable in Antigone, are we confronting a socially instituted foreclosure of the intelligible, a socially instituted melancholia in which the unintelligible life emerges in language as a living body might be interred into a tomb" (*Antigone's Claim* 80-1). Like the spatial trope of the ruin that is the living tomb of Antigone, noise is the living tomb that emerges through the sonorous envelope of musical language at the point of its failure to represent noise as intelligible music.

These points of emergence that are marked as both queer for their unintelligible emission — "what sounds to you like a big load of trashy old noise" — and prophetic for their forecast of social control can be encountered since the common practice period around which Schopenhauer situates his ideas on music. Now canonized within the western avant-garde, they

run from Arnold Schoenberg's dodecaphonic method, which expanded the rules for harmony, to the Futurist celebration of the noise of industry, most notable in Luigi Russolo's manifesto *The Art of Noises*, to John Cage's realization of the impossibility of silence, after which any sound can be framed as music.

I mention this archive to indicate that the noise I describe is not without precedence. I also do so, however, to indicate that one way in which the aesthetic production of the above can be thought in concert is through its instrumentalization of noise. In this sense, novel harmonic systems, novel instrumentation, and/or novel compositional strategies respectively, locate in noise a use value that can be captured, controlled, and applied toward the end of a continuous dilation of music, as "composers using [dissonance] tended to think of their work as reinvigorating the western tradition of music" (Hegarty 12). So while sonically these noises are distinct from the music philosophized by Schopenhauer, they still, I think, play by his rules, if, albeit, by making new rules — by not playing arbitrarily with the means of art. In light of the more contemporary development of a genre of noise music, or more specifically Japanoise, which is influenced in some cases by the above avant-garde, the two sonic transplantations of "IW2KWLI" I visit below by Julie Ruin and Mi Ami actually probably sound quite musical. My description of them here, however, is not concerned with tracing any particular musical lineages or characteristics that would qualify a particular piece of music for inclusion as part of the genre of noise. Rather, noise works for me as a queer tactic of sound making that spatializes bungling.

On that note, the second perversion of the song I visit occurs in the 1998 Julie Ruin song "I Wanna Know What Love Is." Julie Ruin started as the solo project of Kathleen Hanna and has now been revised and revitalized as a fully fledged band. Hanna developed Julie Ruin initially between two other projects, the riot grrrl band Bikini Kill and the electroclash band Le Tigre. Hanna ironizes "IW2KWLI" by casualizing the infinitive of the title and "sampling" it as chorus of her song, which occurs between verses concerning police brutality, incompetence, and violence against women. I say "sample" because Hanna does not actually reproduce Foreigner's recording, but revoices it. These revoicings are sandwiched between two more conventional samples. The first asks, "Do you remember when we were young and impressionable and taught to believe everything the Great White Father told us?" This sampled question from feminist comedian and musician Rusty Warren echoes the press release for the record, which asks, "What would l'Écriture féminine sound like as music?" (Joy Press and Walters) The second sample is the first half of a question, "When they kick at your front door" (the second half of which follows: "How you going to come?") and comes from the 1979 Clash song "The Guns of Brixton," a song also concerning police brutality. Le Tigre member Johanna Fateman has described the band as "fuck[ing] with pop structure and pop pleasure by contaminating it with political content and simplistic uses of Techno apparatus", which I think also applies to the Julie Ruin project (Joy Press and Walters). While the sources of these other samples in this song accomplish contamination in terms of political content, the

Julie Ruin project also contaminates through its implementation of technology. The Julie Ruin record was recorded by Hanna alone in her closet and employs a junkshop sampler and drum machine (ibid.). While the closet is still an indoor space, it marks a de- and then re-territorialization of music production (Hegarty 185), and in this case, one that lends itself to "messing around," such that Hanna's lo-fi production strips away the polish of "IW2KWLI" and with it, its assumed significance (Joy Press and Walters). Rather "than be some dick's maid, babe, or wife", as the original seems to imply, Hanna's "I Wanna Know What Love Is" is a performance of noise that interferes in patriarchal authority and musical overproduction.

While I have already stated that I do not attempt to trace a historic lineage of noise as my main line of argumentation here, situating Julie Ruin as a project that emerges from riot grrrl is significant for the way in which that movement deploys the figure of the girl. The girl is not only another uniting factor across *Show Me Love*, Julie Ruin, and Mi Ami, but is also a figure that relates to the ruin of Julie Ruin, or the melancholic noise of the living tomb, with which I began this section. Like Antigone, who stubbornly clings to the need for ritual acknowledgement of her brother's death even at the expense of her well being in the status quo, Julie Ruin's deployment of the girl foregrounds a politics that are potentially lost in developmental and progressive narratives of sex and gender. This is evident from the opening lyrics of the song, in which Hanna poses a question of her own: "How many girls stay awake all night too scared to sleep and too scared to fight back?" Elizabeth Freeman, in her work around queer temporalities, has described the girl in terms very similar to those I attribute to the tactics of queer noise: "[The girl] represents what Elspeth Probyn calls 'a political tactic ... used to turn identity inside out.' The girl-sign acknowledges an uncontrollable past, the uncontrollability of the past, its inability to explain the present — and the promising *distortions* effected when the past suddenly, unpredictably erupts into the present forms of sexual and gendered personhood" ("Packing History" 741, emphasis mine). If, following Butler, the living tomb of Antigone offers a literal spatialization of melancholy, then what does that tomb sound like? One answer that the girl offers in her temporal distortions is "noisy." Freeman's work also points to the ways in which the girl conceptually contains bungling and perversion: "Perverts — melancholically attached to obsolete erotic objects or fetishes they ought to have outgrown, or repeating unproductive bodily behaviors over and over — refuse the commodity-time of speedy manufacture and planned obsolescence" ("Turn the Beat Around" 34). In moving from Julie Ruin to Mi Ami, I move, then, from the girlish and melancholic qualities of noise, to those related qualities of perversion, obsolescence, and unproductivity.

GIVE ME YR EARS, SPLIT OPEN YR HEAD

Above, I discussed the spatialization of noise as melancholic, not because of its lugubriousness, but because of its unintelligibility. Queer relationalities can be discussed similarly as unintelligible. Most immediately, one reason for which they are foreclosed from

the intelligible is that they perform a different form of foreclosure: "The problem with queer lives, then, is that they categorically foreclose the biological expression of utility — reproduction" (Winnubst 84). Noise is queer in a similar sense of being nonreproductive, both in that noise is often times generated through improper use of, and bungling with, instrumentation and in that, subsequently, noise does not reproduce the rules and the numbers of music, but instead moves toward a space outside of rules, or a space where rules are yet to be determined and implemented. Thus while noise is prophetic, it is not deterministic; it does not bring about a futurity that is presumed will come to fruition, a probability, but actively creates the conditions on which the future will act, a potentiality. In the words of Sonic Youth, "chaos is the future" ("Confusion is Next").

But to think about queerness (and noise for that matter) in terms exclusively of biological nonreproduction places it in a restricted economy.^[4] Within such an economy, queerness is flattened, reduced, and distilled to genitalia. The result of which is not only moral panic around and policing of queer sex acts — what queers are or are not doing with their bodies — but also the privilege, mobility, and ascendance of the white gay male who, "through the metonymic exchange of capital reproduction for the foreclosed biological reproduction," is allotted a certain transient acceptance and power within the fixed economy of utility (Winnubst 84). Just as the codification of sound delimits, naturalizes, and legitimizes what counts as music at the expense and control of the potentiality of sound, the codification of identity (sexual and otherwise) requires a similar maintenance of exclusion. As sexuality is limitedly defined genitally, identity is limitedly defined biologically. Identity works by assigning a code, presumed to be stable, based on biometric and biographic information, which can then be managed. I now return to the Batailleian thought to which I have already gestured. Outside and underneath such restricted economies of biology and capital, Bataille suggests thinking in terms of general economy, in which production, distribution, and consumption are not activities that regulate and safeguard against a scarcity — of bodies, of capital — but are activities that must confront that which they will inevitably be unable to recuperate. This excess Bataille terms the *accursed share*, as that which precipitates from "the unoblatable wave of senseless wastage welling up beneath human endeavour" (Land 46).

A general economy of queerness, then, can be thought of less in terms of sexuality and more in terms of eroticism. Eroticism, for Bataille, names that pull toward animality from which we must have been separated in order to constitute ourselves as human: "To abhor squandering uselessness or, at the other end of production, to abhor excessive waste, is to distance oneself from animality" (Winnubst 85). Eroticism, as such, already resounds with noise in Schopenhauer: "The impure discords, giving no definite interval, can be compared to the monstrous abortions between two species of animals, or between man and animal" (*World Will Representation* 259). This is to suggest, then, that part of what queerness does is debase and desublimates the human subject insofar as it has come to be constituted by restricted economies based on a telos of utility. Music has been configured within such an economy as it

has been aligned with numerical codification and with the ascent of man away from inorganic matter and animality and toward himself, away from the bass and toward the soprano, or, more generally, away from rhythm and toward melody. A queer sensitivity and attention to noise not only reveals and revels in the byproducts of procreativity and capitalism but does the necessary social work of sacrificially expelling that waste, as an earthworm does in dirt. Perhaps it seems strange to describe an earthworm as performing sacrificial work. Indeed, for Nancy, sacrifice is a religious term that necessarily labels an attempt to reach up toward the sacred, which always remains unattainable and distinct.^[5] I use sacrifice here, however, in the Bataille sense I began with, retaining an anti-religiosity, but all the while still describing the rupture of personal homogeneity that queer noise performs as a form of sovereign consumption. That is, as the kind of consumption that occurs in general economy, "consumption that does no work, produces no new workers, and uses energy without recompense" (Wendling 47). Significantly, sacrifice as such is an impossible project insofar as it never reaches completion, for there is no general economy outside a restricted one; "however, the sense of this impossibility, this living-on through failure, is exactly the only sovereignty [briefly] attainable" (Hegarty 48).

Harkening both to sovereign consumption in the form of the carnal sacrifice of circumcision as well as to a violence against authority, like that proposed by Hanna, the third and final perversion of "IW2KWLI" I visit occurs in the 2009 Mi Ami (two members of which were previously involved with the post-hardcore project Black Eyes) song "Cut Men" from the EP of the same name. Like Hanna, "Cut Men" makes "IW2KWLI" noisy by revoicing its chorus, though not in the same way. Unlike the Julie Ruin song, in "Cut Men", "I want to know what love is" are some of the only words I can understand. Two factors make this so. They are the noise-making tactics I highlight in this song. The first has to do with lead singer Daniel Martin-McCormick's shrieking vocals, which have been described as "sounding frighteningly like a 15-year-old girl having an orgasm on peyote" (Sciortino). What the loss of control that this description points to in its combination of feminization, eroticization, and intoxication is the way in which the vocals on this track expose the limits of what is perceived to be one's natural pitch. In this respect, the noisiness of "Cut Men" recalls Roland Barthes' notion of the grain of the voice, which "takes away the possibility of expression being controlled by the subject/individual and democratizes the listening judgment to be made. In addition, this grain creates the individuality of the voice in its own right. [...] This individualization further minimizes the singer/speaker's role in producing 'their' voice, because [...] this 'individuality' is not a personal one, it is not someone's property" (31-32). Martin-McCormick's vocals, though individual in their sonic quality, are not individual in the sense of being possessed solely by him; rather, their individual quality is offered to the collectivity of the audience. The second noisy factor also has something to do with a democratization of the listening judgment. Situating their sound against the calculated and compressed heaviness to be listened to in corporate rock, the band stresses the importance of

a sound that is physical and embodied, one played not by assigning a differentiated dynamic to each part of the song, but by weaving together all parts in full relief, such that the rhythm has equal footing with the melody. This is precisely the language of white noise, 'sound in which all frequencies have equal amplitude [...] it replaces conventional signification with a visceral experience, particularly if noise relates to the use of excessive volume' (Bannister 158). This viscosity is one in which Tongson brings together the idea of a noise and a queerness that cut through restricted economies such that the sound emitted exceeds the control of its performer and reaches out into the world, "a kind of collective musical experimentation that does not obsess upon the wounds of the self but turns wounded music into something that might literally move others [...] move them to dance" (Tongson, "Tickle Me Emo" 64). This is precisely the way in which people are moved at a Mi Ami show.

WAVES OF MUTILATION, OR, I WANT TO KNOW WHAT SHATTERED LOVE IS

Mi Ami have another EP called *Echononecho*. As a way of transitioning from their work in its specificity and back to a discussion of noise across the examples I have proffered, and, as a way of beginning to conclude, I devote some attention to wanting to know what love is through this idea of the echo. The echo is qualitatively both melancholic and inorganic, both persisting as an object beyond the death and decay of the voice and persisting with difference maintained through mechanical repetition. Together, these qualities destabilize conceptions of what is natural — of the identity, location, and coherence of narrative subject and symbolic meaning. Brian Massumi (who, incidentally, translated Attali's book), using the echo to discuss his understanding of intensity, remarks, "An echo, for example, cannot occur without a distance between surfaces for the sounds to bounce off of. But the resonance is not on the walls. It is in the emptiness between them. It fills the emptiness with its complex patterning. [...] The interference pattern arises where the sound wave intersects with itself. The bouncing back and forth multiplies the sound's movement [...] Resonance can be seen as converting distance, or extension, into intensity. It is a qualitative transformation of distance into an immediacy of self-relation" (14). What interests me in this quote is the way in which Massumi first spatializes sound and then quickly converts that spatialization into not a substantive but a relative self by way of interference. Massumi goes on to discuss the capacity for a self to relate in terms of affect. The affect up for discussion, here, of course, is love. While love in the lay sense is not an affect in Massumi's Deleuzian terms, Nancy's notion of shattered love does approach the pre-discursive and pre-personal. As such, I argue that the performance of noise in these performances of "IW2KWL I" are in fact affective performances of shattered love. Shattered love moves away from love defined in ways similar to those in which I have discussed music and Foreigner's performance, those that employ a terminology of "desire [...] demand,

seduction, dependence, and so on,' and an associated analytics of 'calculation, investment, completion, retribution, and the like" (*Inoperative Community* 98). Shattered love is an extraction and departure from carnal lust, Oedipalized desire, and misogynist romance. Rather than actually pursuing love or even pursuing wanting to know what love is, noise performs — noise *does* — shattered loving, a giving that is giving up. This is why I read the condemnation of passion encountered in the first section not as merely a homosexual passion, which could be discussed in terms of lack and fulfillment, but as an aesthetic passion. This moves the conversation from lack to fullness; noise is music filled up. In Massumi's terms, the distance of sounds resonating intensely fills a body with experience. In Nancy's terms, "the beating of the heart — rhythm of the partition of being, syncope of the sharing of singularity — cuts across presence, life, consciousness" (*Inoperative Community* 99). The beating of the heart is a shattering of the self, a cutting into shards, but this cutting is not a diminishment or a separation so much as an affirmation and amplification of difference. I listen to the perversions of "IW2KWL I" in the following two respects: 1. In the bass/base, rhythm, beating, which is precisely what dissonance is — two notes played simultaneously but with slightly different frequencies. 2. In the cut, which is not collected and captured, but novel, transient, and generative. In these senses — in a resonating echo, or in a beating cut — the ear and the heart are aligned, both orifices that necessarily remain open to and constituted by that which passes through them even as that which passes through them is not retained. The queer tactics of noise of my subtitle, then, are ways of acknowledging the always already openness and alignment of the ear and heart, an openness and alignment that constantly negotiate and reconfigure the boundary between interiority and exteriority, subject and world. They temporally and spatially disperse the coherent subject, or make of the subject a living tomb like Antigone's, acknowledging and exposing an intimacy with other objects in the world, a love of and between things. *Show Me Love*, Julie Ruin, and Mi Ami all echo and ironically amplify Foreigner's "I Want to Know What Love Is". In so doing, they perform like the mythological nymph Echo, a girl who repeats the voice of others until she turns to stone. The shattered love of queer noise leaves me standing in ruins behind you.

† † †

Describing the music that Attali foreshadows to come after his book's publication, Susan McClary, in her afterward, remarks that it "bristles with genuine sonic noise [most of it maintains a decibel level physically painful to the uninitiated], and its style incorporates other features that qualify as cultural noise: the bizarre visual appearance of many of its proponents, texts with express political content, and deliberate inclusion of blacks and of women" (157). These features that McClary identifies are engaged in similar and differing ways across the noisy perversions of "IW2KWL I". The first interrupts the visual/spatial narrative of the song, the second its production, and the third its voice. Another way in which their commonality can be described is as "emotionally raw incarnations of arrested development in peripheral spaces," for the woman of Foreigner's music video is replaced by

something decidedly more girlish in the examples that I proffer (Tongson 56). Arrested development (and Tongson and I are riffing on the work of Judith [Jack] Halberstam^[6] here), relates to queer noise in the temporal sense of a prolonged childhood and subsequent delayed maturation. This is how the temporality of the girlish would be couched in normative, closed economies; at the same time, it can also be described as the dislodging of certain affective political registers [teenage feelings] from where they are normally resigned to reside and played out [physically and audibly] across a spectrum of ages. Though the quality of the girl is identifiable here on a molar level (physically sonic and significantly semiotic), she effects subtler though no less radical shifts temporally that allow for the distance necessary for echo. Indeed, for Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the girl is the figure par excellence of a becoming imperceptible, a force of desire that slips into the in between of age and sex, the end of which is a micropolitical knowing how to love. In terms of peripheral spaces, while Tongson is thinking about literal suburbs, I think the attribution of noise to a peripheral space can be brought closer to my discussion of Bataille if thought in terms of the prefix sub-, both of -urban and of -ject. This conception hearkens to the etymology of the sub- in suburban, as outside of and spatially beneath the elevated and walled Roman city and takes into account the necessary excess produced by the city that cannot be contained by its zoning, excesses I locate on the side of a road, in a closet, and on a dance floor. This emphasis on sub- also speaks to the queer sub-ject who, though experiencing music subjectively, emerges in intimate and passionate interaction with and reception of the world that is under, close to, up to, and toward her.^[7] Such a subject in such a space is one that replays the erotic act of listening itself: "To listen is to enter that spatiality by which, at the same time, I am penetrated, for it opens up in me as well as around me, and from me as well as toward me: it opens me inside me as well as outside, and it is through such a double, quadruple, or sextuple opening that a 'self' can take place" (Nancy, *Listening* 14).

The excess, if there is any, of Foreigner's "IW2KWLI" is one ultimately put to the ends of utility — economically, musically, and sexually. The practices I have described above do not revolutionize this song but intervene in it by mis-/dis- using its components by mis-/dis- placing them. In so doing, their noisy musicality encourages a passion, productive of a self, that leads nowhere — one encountered with your girlfriend in the backseat of a stranger's car, with yourself in your closet, and with others on the dance floor.

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Notes

1. "Music was not autonomous, even in the west, until the early modern period" (Hegarty 7).
2. Expelled from a place, refused acceptance, depressed, cast down. The abject has been theorized most saliently in Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* and taken up by performance studies and queer studies alike in works like Karen Shimakawa's *National Abjection: The Asian American Body Onstage* and Darieck Scott's *Extravagant Abjection: Blackness, Power, and Sexuality in the African American Literary Imagination*.
3. "Noises ... are prophetic because they create new orders, unstable and changing" (Attali 19).
4. "[Music] would seem to have the strongest affinities with that most abstract of all social realities, economics, with which it shares a peculiar ultimate object which is number" (Jameson, "Foreword" vii).
5. See: Jean-Luc Nancy. *The Ground of the Image*. Trans. Jeff Fort. New York: Fordham UP, 2005.
6. See: Judith [Jack] Halberstam. *In a Queer Time and Place*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.
7. See: Shaviro, *Without Criteria*

Don Loves Roger

Elisa Kreisinger

Artist Statement

Don Loves Roger mashes up every episode of *Mad Men*, re-editing it into a story about two men who once preserved concepts of manhood and masculinity but then found relief and happiness in each other, becoming a threat to the very same patriarchal system on which their power and privilege was based. Don Loves Roger gives Don an opportunity to subvert rather than sell traditional masculinity.

As artists and critical thinkers, we are so accustomed to negotiating that fine line between being a fan of popular culture and being a critic of it. My practice stems from a desire to create new narratives that bridge the gap between fan and critic while simultaneously queering concepts of copyright, challenging the author/reader and owner/user binaries on which it is based.

Don Loves Roger



"A Very Soft or Long Attack and Release" or Heyyyyyy: Queer Extensities

Amalle Dublon

In his 2008 essay "*DISSS-CO* (A Fragment)," excerpted from his memoir in progress, Douglas Crimp revisits a sheaf of papers he finds in an old folder filed away in the 1970s. Scattered among his notes toward critical and art historical projects are a few pages of disjointed writing that chronicle his experience of disco dancing in New York. One passage finds Crimp leaving the club Flamingo on a Sunday morning in 1976:

As we walked down Houston Street toward the Village, our bodies still gyrated, slowing our walk to a rhythmic amble. Moving at all was slightly painful and yet felt inevitable, as if the music had been absorbed by our muscles, especially the obliques, and would go on propelling that uncontrollable back-and-forth hip-swaying forever. On the way up Bedford Street to Seventh Avenue, two guys overtook and passed us. When one was right next to him, Steven drew out under his breath in a reverent whisper, "*Disss-co*." He gave it the same whooshing, electronic sound as the feedback drone that lingered in our ears, muting the sounds of the early Sunday morning. The two men smiled knowingly. There was no question where all of us were coming from.^[1]

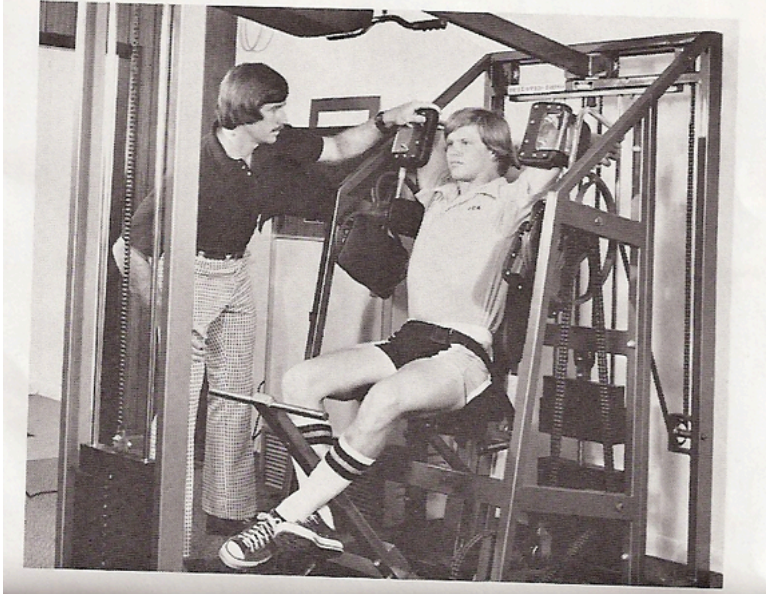
I want to note, first, Crimp's attention to disco's propulsive lingering, and the designation of "our muscles" as a site of that sound reproduction. I am especially interested in Crimp's recording of a casual and ambiguous elongation, somewhere between rhythm and tone, of the word "*disss-co*" itself, whispered to one queer cohort by another. What he calls the "lingering, echoic feedback drone" that this whisper reproduces and prolongs gestures towards a historically coemergent form, though one not often associated with gay popular dance: formalist sound art of the 1970s, which is sometimes caricatured as an endless electronic drone. I would like to attend carefully to this feedback drone, imagining its different forms as variations in queer attunement.

Sonic art practices of the late 1960s and 1970s were among the primary aesthetic sites in which embodied and speculative forms of duration, endurance, and temporal extensity were actively being thought, yet the sexual politics of sonic art, and the preoccupations it shared with contemporaneous practices like disco, remain under-thought, in part because the history of sonic art has been understood as a turning away from the repetitious metrical division of musical rhythm and toward the durational sound of the sustained electronic drone, tone, or frequency.^[2] My aim is not to elide the historical and formal differences between the contexts of early gay disco and 1970s sonic art, but rather to explore their shared preoccupation with the temporalities of extended play, duration, and endurance, and the sexual politics of those temporalities. This paper thus attempts to situate sonic art and its durational drones and tones in relation to both disco as musical sociality and "*disss-co*" as queer vocal transmission.

In his notes, Crimp links disco rhythms to "reps" conducted on newly invented Nautilus machines, both forms of repetition and duration congealing into newly recognizable and reproducible gay gym bodies imagined as "dancing machines." Of the dance floor at 5:30 a.m., the notes in his file record:

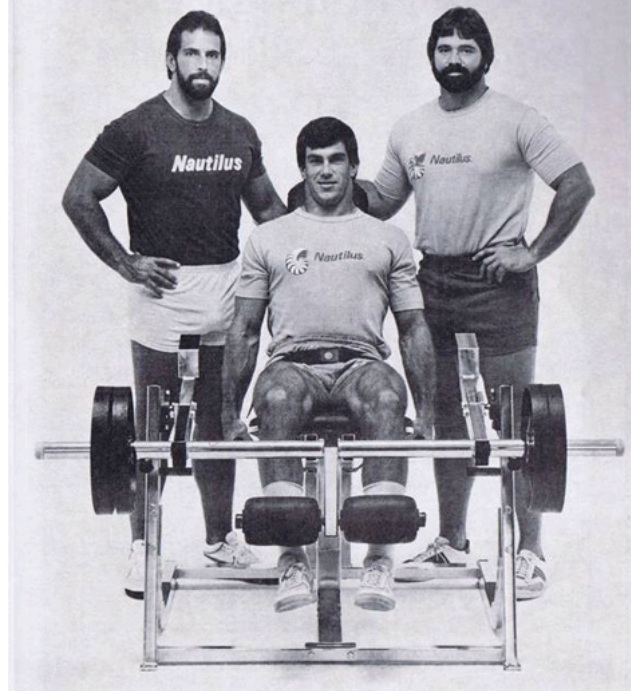
At that point the music is always good, there's plenty of room on the dance floor, and only serious discoers are left. But best of all your body has quit resisting. It has unstoppable momentum. That is the one thing about disco comparable to any other experience. It's like what happens in distance running or swimming. You pass a point where you're beyond tired, beyond pain, beyond even thinking about stopping, thinking only that this could go on forever and you'd love it.^[3]

For the athlete.



Amalle Dublon, 2014, "For the Athlete." Screenshot of Nautilus Print Ad, 1970s.

Leverage is involved in all exercises, with any tool — with a barbell you are unavoidably limited by the random leverage factors involved in all barbell exercises. That limitation has now been removed — by Nautilus.



Amalle Dublon, 2014, "Leverage Is Involved in All Exercises." Screenshot of Nautilus print ad, 1980s.

This passage joins the rhythmic repetition of athletic discipline with a nearly Cagean durational panaurality in which this sound "could go on forever." Dance music historian Tim Lawrence notes that in the 1970s, disco tracks were lengthened until they filled 12-inch records to meet the needs of DJs who would otherwise have to buy two copies of the same record in order to prolong certain passages.^[4] I would like to open this question of extended play in the context of 1970s sonic art, and in particular the work of the feminist composer Pauline Oliveros.

A hugely important figure in the development of electronic art music since the 1950s, Oliveros did not work in an electronic dance music context, and her work is not known for its athleticism or rhythmic intensity. But her work was nonetheless preoccupied with endurance-based performance and audition. A major shift in the emphasis and direction of Oliveros's work is often attributed to her 1974 composition *Sonic Meditations*, a set of scores which emphasize listening,

practiced through extreme extensities — durational, spatialized, and affective — from drawn-out tones and drones, to forms of long-distance and telepathic musical conduction. For example, Section III of *Sonic Meditations* includes instructions for telepathic conduction and attunement, and Section IV for telepathic communication with extraterrestrials, while another section disperses performers in rowboats across a lake.

Pacific Tell

Find your place in a darkened indoor space or a deserted out-of-doors area. Mentally form a sound image. Assume that the magnitude of your concentration on, or the vividness of this sound image will cause one or more of the group to receive this sound image by telepathic transmission. Visualize the person to whom you are sending. Rest after your attempted telepathic transmission by becoming mentally blank. When or if a sound image different from your own forms in your mind, assume that you are receiving from some one else, then make that sound image audible. Rest again by becoming mentally blank or return to your own mental sound image. Continue as long as possible or until all others are quiet.

Telepathic Improvisation

*To the musicians with varied or like instruments:
Tuning — each musician in turn sits or stands in front of the audience for a few minutes. The audience is asked to observe the musician carefully and try to imagine the sound of his or her instrument. The audience is instructed to close eyes and attempt to visualize the musician, then send a sound to the musician by hearing it mentally. The musician waits until he or she receives an impression of a sound mentally, then he or she produces the sound. Members of the audience who have successfully "hit the target" raise their hands as feedback to the musician.*

—IV—

*Divide into two or more groups. Each group must have a tape recorder and be sound isolated from the other groups. The distance might be small or great, i.e., thousands of miles or light years. Each group then performs Pacific Tell or Telepathic Improvisation, attempting inter group or interstellar telepathic transmission. A specific time period may be pre-arranged. Each group tape records its own sounds during the telepathic transmission period for later comparison.
Variation: Instead of working in groups each participant works as an isolated soloist.*

Pauline Oliveros, III- *Pacific Tell* with *Telepathic Improvisation*, and IV from *Sonic Meditations*, 1974

Amalle Dublon, 2014, Screenshot of scores from Pauline Oliveros's *Sonic Meditations* (III-Pacific Tell with Telepathic Improvisation, and IV) Baltimore: Smith Publications, 1974.

All of these extreme extensities — forms of extended play which I would argue echo (at least retrospectively) both the seriousness and the silliness of new age and lesbian feminist aesthetics ^[5] — are nonetheless governed by the more limited tempo and capacities of the breath, an enduring rhythm which Oliveros instructs performers to establish at the outset of each section.

In 1970, Oliveros published the score for *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe, in Recognition of Their Desperation* — —, which calls for performers to select five tones that they will sustain and repeat over the entire course of the performance, lasting from thirty minutes to an hour. In interviews, Oliveros has said, somewhat enigmatically, that she derived her formal directives as a composer — not only for this work, but also for subsequent major works, including *Sonic Meditations* — from Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto* (<http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/shivers/rants/scum.html>). What to make of a forty-year formalist practice derived from SCUM protocols? And what does a practice of endurance and extensity have to do with this dedication to Solanas and Monroe?

**To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe
In Recognition of Their Desperation - - -**

by Pauline Oliveros

INSTRUMENTATION: Any group or groups of instrumentalists, from small chamber ensemble to large orchestra, may be utilized. Singers who have perfect pitch (or a pitch pipe) may be included. Pipe organ, electrophonic instruments and electronic music systems may be used.

ORCHESTRAL VERSION: Divide into three or more groups, each with approximately equal strings, winds, brass and pitched percussion. Pipe organ or electronic music system is classed as a group. The groups are placed **antiphonally** in the space. Each group except the pipe organ or electronic music system must have a conductor.

CHAMBER VERSION: For each group of like instruments, one performer acts as the leader, i.e. string leader, brass leader, wind leader, etc. All performers occupy one area in the space.

DURATION: 30 minutes (3, 10 minute sections)
45 minutes (3, 15 minute sections)
60 minutes (3, 20 minute sections)

The duration of the three sections is controlled by a lighting system. Section 1 is all red light, Section 2 is all yellow light, and Section 3 is all blue light. The system capability must allow the operator to cross fade the different lights very gradually. The color changes act as cues for the performers. (These cues will be described under the performance directions.)

In addition to the three color changes, two high intensity (strobe or photo flash) white flashes are necessary. The first one happens after 2/3 of the time of Section 1. The second flash happens after 1/3 the time of Section 3.

Ideally, the color changes should cover the entire auditorium, audience as well as performers. If this is impractical, then all of the performers must be covered by the light or at least aware of the color changes and the two flashes.

Amalie Dublon, 2014, Screenshot of excerpts Pauline Oliveros, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation - - -* (Baltimore: Smith Publications, 1977).

PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS:

The basis of this composition is the performance, by all players, of very long tones and any possible modulation or variation of any part of the tone which does not change the fundamental frequency of the tone. Variations of the long tones may be affected by independent or simultaneous modulations of amplitude (volume), articulation, formant or partials (timbre), or any other means within the capability of the performers. Vibrato or regular tonal fluctuations through the pitch center is permissible.

All players select five different pitches without consulting each other. At least two of the pitches must be in a non-diatonic or dissonant relationship to the other three pitches. Pitch choice should be influenced also by registers which are comfortable and afford the greatest variety of modulation.

An unmodulated long tone has a very soft or long attack and release and is sustained at one dynamic level.

September 28, 1970
Holland, Michigan

Amalie Dublon, 2014, Screenshot of excerpts from Pauline Oliveros, *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe in Recognition of Their Desperation - - -* (Baltimore: Smith Publications, 1977).

If Solanas's text, aimed from and for a Society for Cutting Up Men, gestures toward any formal operation, it would seem to be that of the cut, a historically rich operation for many sound practitioners from hip hop to Yoko Ono to Pierre Schaeffer. Yet Oliveros's formal program after 1970 derives not from explicitly from the gesture of the cut, but rather from the first initial of SCUM — the *Society* for Cutting Up Men — and its implicit reference, for her, to a kind of feminist sociality:

Well Valerie Solanas was a street kid, a street feminist. The structure of community was detailed in that manifesto. What I articulated out of the SCUM Manifesto was the deep structure of the piece. ^[6]

In the context of Oliveros's work, this structure is one of an ensemble or study group for the internal exploration of the extended tone and its variations, achieved in part through the antiphone, an echoic, circular musical structure and bodily arrangement in space.

The antiphone functions as an armature for the movement of performance and audition, sound and listening, described by the title-as-dedication. The title's formal address — to Solanas and Monroe in recognition of their desperation — holds in tension the almost comically overburdened names of Solanas and Monroe with the nameless continuous sound that both

“recognizes” and dissolves those figures. The figural (Solanas, Monroe) escapes into that extended sound, which nonetheless also functions as the substance of a careful attention to precisely the exhaustion, desperation, and dissolution of those overburdened figures. In an eerie performance of *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe* (<http://vimeo.com/43169124>) at the 2012 Her Noise Symposium in London, what becomes audible in the extreme extension of the performers’ tones is the movement of their auto-approximation — the inevitable variations internal to each tone, which form a wavering halo around the pitch center that they seek. What we hear is less a sonic emission than a receptive environment, a seeking, tuning in, or listening. Suspended between broadcast and reception, like a séance or a study group, it’s as if it is the performed sound itself that is listening for a transmission.^[77]

The question of study — study of form, and study as aesthetic form — is central to Oliveros’s work from 1970 forward, driven by her reading of SCUM. In her introduction to the 2004 reissue of the *SCUM Manifesto*, Avital Ronell writes of the “quasi-linguistic” sound worlds of Solanas’s speech:

If you are pegged as a woman, your scream might be noted as part of an ensemble of subaltern feints — the complaint, the nagging, the picking, the chatter, the nonsense by which women’s speech has been largely depreciated or historically tagged. Other quasi-linguistic worlds open up in this space, springing from the noncanonized tropes of moaning and bitching.^[81]

What would the antiphonal study of such quasi-linguistic forms entail? The dedication that Oliveros offers in place of a title for *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe* prefigures another dedication to precisely such a study group, the ♀ Ensemble, for whom *Sonic Meditations* was written. An all-woman improvisation group, the ♀ Ensemble was convened by Oliveros specifically to produce and study long sustained tones, through which developed the concept of “sonic awareness” key to Oliveros’s ongoing practice.

Made up of musicians as well as unprofessional performers, the ♀ Ensemble undertook a kind of consciousness-raising on the level of what I would like to think of as feminist formalism. Indeed, the consciousness-raising group, like the ♀ Ensemble, historically drew for its procedures of study and discovery on what we might call untrained vocal extensivity (or long-windedness), on non-heteronormative forms of social and vocal reproduction, on affects of endurance and boredom, and even on the drone attributed to women talking with each other. *To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe* and the ♀ Ensemble both implicitly cite the consciousness-raising group as an antiphonic, echoic vocal form.

SONIC MEDITATIONS

INTRODUCTION I

Sonic Meditations are intended for group work over a long period of time with regular meetings. No special skills are necessary. Any persons who are willing to commit themselves can participate. The ♀ Ensemble to whom these meditations are dedicated has found that non-verbal meetings intensify the results of these meditations and help provide an atmosphere which is conducive to such activity. With continuous work some of the following becomes possible with Sonic Meditations: Heightened states of awareness or expanded consciousness, changes in physiology and psychology from known and unknown tensions to relaxations which gradually become permanent. These changes may represent a tuning of mind and body. The group may develop positive energy which can influence others who are less experienced. Members of the Group may achieve greater awareness and sensitivity to each other. Music is a welcome by-product of this activity.



The ♀ Ensemble performing *Teach Yourself to Fly* from *Sonic Meditations*, 1970, Rancho Santa Fe, CA. Clockwise from foreground: Lin Barron, cello; Chris Voigt; Betty Wong; Joan George, bass clarinet; Bonnie Barnett; Oliveros, accordion; Shirley Wong; and Lynn Lonidier, cello. Pauline Oliveros Papers. MSS 102. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

The ♀ Ensemble performing *Teach Yourself to Fly* from *Sonic Meditations*, 1970, Rancho Santa Fe, CA. Clockwise from foreground: Lin Barron, cello; Chris Voigt; Betty Wong; Joan George, bass clarinet; Bonnie Barnett; Oliveros, accordion; Shirley Wong; and Lynn Lonidier, cello. Pauline Oliveros Papers. MSS 102. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

This echoic voice is taken up by Gayatri Spivak in her 1993 essay “Echo,” in which Spivak considers the nymph Echo, admirer of Narcissus, as a figuration of the voice left out of the persistent psychoanalytic association of Narcissus (and narcissism) with women and the image. In place of the fixity of the narcissistic image, Spivak takes up the reproductive displacement of the voice invoked by Echo. Jilted by Narcissus, Echo is, of course, condemned to sound reproduction in perpetuity, beyond death: “For Echo is obliged to echo everyone who speaks. ... [She] is obliged to be imperfectly and interceptively responsive to another’s desire. ... It is the catachresis of response as such.”^[9]

Spivak’s theorization of Echo in terms of a gendered submission to chance (or, more precisely, to both formal constraint and insistent misprision), describes one of the most commonly cited features of Cagean and post-Cagean aesthetics, including Oliveros’s work. And in its lingering transmission and reproduction of another’s sound, Echo’s voice recalls the whispered “*disss-co.*”

Echo’s extensity — her extension of the voice beyond the living body and her ambiguous reproduction of speech — links her, as respondent and reproducer, back to the queerly echoic, ambiguous phonic elongation of “*disss-co.*” In a blog post for *The Atlantic Wire* aptly titled “Why Drag It Out,” Jen Doll describes (<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/03/dragging-it-out/309220/>) the vocal and written phenomenon of “word extension” among young women, in which extra letters are added to words to mimic the affect of phonic elongation — a vocal habit also associated with queer and feminine people more broadly.^[10]



WORDPLAY MARCH 2013

Why Drag It Out?

An investigation into what inspires soooo many people to toss extra letters into their text messages

JEN DOLL | FEB 20 2013, 9:09 PM ET



Nishant Choksi

"Hiiiiii," HE TEXTED. "Hiiiiii," I responded. "How are youuuuuu?"

Rest assured: I am an adult. I even write for a living—often about grammar,

Amelle Dublon, 2014. Screenshot of Doll, Jen. "Why Drag It Out? An investigation into what inspires soooo many people to toss extra letters into their text messages." *The Atlantic Wire*. February 20, 2013.
<<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/03/dragging-it-out/309220/>>
(<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/03/dragging-it-out/309220/>)>



maleminded.tumblr

Heyyyyyy. <<http://maleminded.tumblr.com/post/8352519487>>
(<http://maleminded.tumblr.com/post/8352519487>)> Accessed March 10, 2013.

The subject of a computational sociolinguistics study (<http://arxiv.org/abs/1210.4567>) released in October 2012, word elongation triggered a flurry of commentary (<http://www.buzzfeed.com/katieheaney/how-men-and-women-tweet>) on sites from Buzzfeed to *Bust Magazine* to the *New York Times*, nearly all of it cross-linked with similar posts on the equally feminine and queer habit (<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/27/girls-add-a-growl-to-teen-lexicon>) of vocal fry (<http://news.sciencemag.org/sciencenow/2011/12/vocal-fry-creeping-into-us-spec.html>) or “creaky voice.”^[11]

First recognized within music pedagogy in the 1970s, and later taken up much more broadly within phonetics, where it has remained on the edge of categorization as a speech pathology, vocal fry is a kind of gravelly glottal dragging sound that happens in the lower vocal registers.^[12] “Creaky voice” is widely figured as a queer and feminine habit, a kind of vocal decadence or laziness marked as much by slowing and deepening as by a rhythmic internal differentiation (that gravelly sound) designated by speech pathologists as “jitter” and “shimmer,” or variations in pitch and volume.^[13]

In many of the recent accounts, letter repetition and word extensity, like vocal fry, are made to represent a feminized futurity — their practitioners being “like, way ahead of the linguistic currrrrrve” (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/28/science/young-women-often-trendsetters-in-vocal-patterns.html>) as a *New York Times*

headline had it.

But this extensity is also a linguistic

(http://www.slate.com/articles/podcasts/lexicon_valley/2013/01/lexicon_valley_on_creaky_voice_or_vocal_fry_in_young_american_women.htm) (<http://shine.yahoo.com/healthy-living/8220-annoying-8221-girl-voice-164900387.html>), a kind of leisurely, wasteful hesitation.^[14] The queer and feminine voice inserts itself, in the form of extralinguistic, echoic, repetitious marks, into the written word, distending and inflating it.



Amalle Dublon, 2013, Screenshot from Stoeffel, Kat. "How to Tweet Like a Girl." The Cut blog. *New York Magazine*. February 19, 2013. <<http://nymag.com/thecut/2013/02/how-to-tweet-like-a-girl.html>> (<http://nymag.com/thecut/2013/02/how-to-tweet-like-a-girl.html>)>

Drawing on the computational linguistics study, a *New York Magazine* blog post on "[How to Tweet Like a Girl](http://nymag.com/thecut/2013/02/how-to-tweet-like-a-girl.html)" (<http://nymag.com/thecut/2013/02/how-to-tweet-like-a-girl.html>) is pointedly illustrated with a screen cap from a Dr. Phil interview with Ronaiah Tuiasosopo, best known for "tricking" an NFL player into a long-distance relationship by "impersonating" a woman's voice.^[15] Included in the list of examples of feminine phonics, alongside "tweeting your feelings" and "emoting with punctuation," is trying to "transcribe the sounds you're making." It's as if the key symptom of transfeminine sound — here linked to a certain Dr. Phil epidemiology — is the oddly formal aesthetic protocol of scoring and transcribing an unwieldy phonic duration.

A *Bust Magazine* blog post on word extension relates it to a kind of affective labor: "elongated words are a sign of politeness and added care ... 'extra letters soften the blow.'"^[16] As in the whispered word "*disss-co*," this softening or ambiguous rendering functions as a kind of out of phase feedback drone, preemptively echoing and evading the imagined expectations of the addressee, as if an anticipatory penumbra halos and holds the unstable coordination of mutuality.

To apply what I want to call feminist formalism to this feminine and queer vocal habit, the blur around a word might be referred to as a spectral envelope, or, as Oliveros's score would put it, "fluctuations through the pitch center," or "a very soft or long attack and release." A queer feminine speech impediment here answers to and evades the regulative demands of communication even as it extends and reproduces the voice as anticomunicative communal substance. It's this reproductive extensity — a feminine labor of maintenance, an anti-heteronormative generativity — that a queer feminist formalism must attend to.

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Toward a Queer Temporality of Hip Hop: An Annotated Playlist

Hilary Berwick

An Annotated Playlist, With Noise

To ask questions of noise and culture is to already speak of hip hop. Noise studies often begins by distinguishing sound, music, and noise; the first is often defined scientifically as waves, while music is designated organized sound and noise is termed sound waves that are disorganized, unexpected, undesired, or difficult to make sense of. However, ‘noise’ is also a denotative value judgment applied to music. To ‘queer’ noise also asks us to articulate the political uses to which ‘noise’ has been put in a history of popular musical production. In his *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Jacques Attali calls for attention to the way “material production has been supplanted by the exchange of signs” (4); it is easy to think of the recording industry in the U.S. 20th century, which shows that material production has always been an exchange of signs, particularly for Black American musicians categorized as race records or black music, because of the color of their skin rather than because of any generic distinction in their music (Garafalo 124). Contemporary sound studies scholars like John Corbett and Richard Leppert point to hip hop and Black American music as evidence of the revolutionary or redemptive possibilities of popular music; they see hip hop as music that self-proclaims and is labeled noise. In what follows, I attempt to move beyond the standard academic article into what I call an annotated playlist, using examples of music as evidence, in addition to scholarly work, to make my claims. I do this in part because the music shows clearly how hip hop complicates sexuality, temporality, and representations of bodies, but also as homage to a form relies on breaks and flows to emphasize what follows them. Ideally, this annotated playlist allows for co-temporal, multi-sensory analysis, as I hope my readers will listen along while they read, and form their own breaks and flows through my argument. I argue that hip hop occupies a vexed, contradictory position in both popular music and temporality: hip hop is held up as both the future of popular music and also unprogressive in its politics, while it also emphasizes a constant reiteration of the present while orienting itself as a future both mourning and celebrating its past. This queer temporality enables an affective reach from both past and future, an iterative reworking of sexual, racialized, and temporal themes.

Because hip hop is impossible to read outside of its cultural (read: racial and gendered and class) context, we can see how the application of the label “noise” to hip hop is already political. Hip hop music, broadly, is usually defined as music with voices calling or rhyming over polyrhythmic beats. “Rap,” calling over beats, is one aspect of the cultural movement of hip hop; DJing, creating the beats themselves, is another. Hip hop is often understood to hail back to Africanist roots, particularly because of this polyrhythmic emphasis (Osumare 44). It is within this context that Public Enemy’s 1988 album *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* makes immediate sense: the second track, “Bring the Noise,” vies with their seventh, “Louder than a Bomb”, to describe both their aesthetic style and political ideals. “Bring the Noise”

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functions discursively to take back what mainstream U.S. culture named them pejoratively, self-labeling ‘noise’ as queer has been ‘taken back’ from pejorative use. Like the use of queer, ‘noise’ is still an insult, but after this album, it was also self-identification. Too, *It Takes a Nation* followed its own request to bring noise to rap; where previous hip hop hits had been relatively simple in sound, with few layers, Public Enemy layered beats, melodies, sirens and noises to emulate urban street sounds, and rapped over that.

A Truncated History of Queer Black Music

Rap music, both as noise and as pop music, already haunts sound studies. Similarly, hip hop complicates temporality, insisting on questions of afterness and after-mortality. Hip hop, and Black American music more broadly, has already offered a history of queerness in pop music; to ignore this is to re-perform the reductive racial categorization the record industry has performed since its advent. Blues scholarship points to ways that the Blues, often hailed as the first Black American musical form, already ‘queer’ sound a little because, historically, blues musicians have played outside of social expectations and norms, in excess of them. Female blues artists, in particular, have used music to queer heteronormative ideals of sexuality (Carby). Ida Cox’s “One Hour Mama” (1939) is a very public denigration of male sexual prowess, while Gertrude “Ma” Rainey sings “Prove It On Me Blues”

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(1928) to show that while she “wear[s] a collar and a tie” and “talk[s] to the gals just like any old man,” folks are still going to have to “prove it on” her if they are going to accuse her of standing outside normative sexuality.

Contemporary Black American music shows a story that is shifting in terms of sexuality. Outside of the dominant narrative in which hip hop is inherently misogynistic and homophobic, Frank Ocean, Azealia Banks, and Big Freedia, among others, show how the malleability of

signifying in Black music allows space for queerness through ambivalence, polysemy and metaphor.^[1] Thus, Frank Ocean's "Thinkin Bout You"

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begins with the weather-based signifyin' that permeates the history of blues music: he sings, "A tornado flew around my room / before you came / excuse the mess it made / it usually doesn't rain in / Southern California..." and while metaphor exists in much of music, Ocean hails a specific blues history that uses the weather and everyday life to point to, without explicitly articulating, romantic and social upheaval.^[2] What this metaphorical signifyin' allows Ocean to do is speak to homosexuality through colloquialisms: "It usually doesn't rain in / Southern California / much like Arizona / my eyes don't shed tears, but, boy, they bawl when I'm thinkin' 'bout you". This "boy" gets read varyingly, in light of Ocean's July 2012 announcement of having fallen in love with a man.^[3] "Boy" is both a direct object (boy, I am thinking about *you*) and also an interjection (*boy*, have I been thinking about the you that is addressed in this song). As such, for folks who are listening for it, Ocean is queer; for folks who aren't listening against the grain, boy, Frank Ocean is sad.

Fetishization, Haunting, Afterness

However, I argue that hip hop presents queer possibilities beyond same sex relationships in the production of hip hop, for all that those are worth noting. Certainly, to queer noise and hip hop would necessarily point to the political uses to which 'noise' has been put in a history of popular musical production. Even Attali, who sets out to investigate noise, must first argue for the primacy of music, or noise that is given coded meaning, in cultural investigation. It is with this explicitly in mind that Corbett argues for noise as already marked as a lack, a lack which provides evidence for the fidelity of a particular recording technique. Corbett describes a "cultivation of lack itself; loving the gap; noise reduction; and consequently, fetishization of the technology that produces the lack" (89). In this small way, noise also points to its absence, to the technological ability to eradicate it but also to the power of the lack. Despite this fetishization of 'clean' sound, and also enabled by it, some records utilize the phonographic technique by which post-production introduces vinyl static back into the sound, using the lack of 'natural' static as an absent space into which to insert the familiar, and presumed more authentic, crackle of a record player.

The lack, the nostalgic absence, and afterness are crucial themes in hop hop. From Biggie's "Life After Death"

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to Tupac Shakur, for whom two thirds of his albums were released after his murder, the topics of living after poverty, death, and the afterlife, have been instrumental to defining hip hop from the early 90s onward. It is worth noting that hip hop's much celebrated first song, "Rapper's Delight,"

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is party rap, intended to make people dance, but still includes reference both to having made it (“You see, I got more clothes than Muhammed Ali and I dress so viciously... I got a color TV, so I can see / the Knicks play basketball...”) and also to mortality (“there’s a time to laugh, a time to cry, a time to live, and a time to die...”). Hip hop’s emphasis on after-death as well as on after-success — having made it, in the past tense — queers temporality, forcing sound scholars to consider questions of afterness.

In his examination of eulogies of Tupac and Biggie, Barrett opens by saying “The dead body is one thing; the dead black body another” (306). It is not merely that the deaths of Tupac and Biggie, in September 1996 and March 1997 respectively, allow for a kind of eulogizing that “ascribes to young black men a seemingly inherent relation to violence” even while mourning that positionality (Barrett 306). It is also that what hip hop also does is emphasize the after-death, from Tupac and Biggie, as well as emphasizing after-success (having made it, in the past tense). To focus so explicitly on afterness provokes questions of mourning, much like Derrida’s hauntology, in a way that both takes up and also mirrors the temporalities of Christian theology. Hauntology, for Derrida, is an ontology of haunting, the work of mourning that traces the being of an absence, but the mark of that absent being, the specter (63). I offer that this relationship to temporality — to afterness, which is also a rejection of the present — is part what allows hip hop to seem to offer rebellion and change, even while hip hop is decried for being unprogressive.

For Derrida, mourning is both necessity and result of the hauntology of our present. Derrida’s articulation of the *revenant* as something that “[o]ne does not know if it is living or if it is dead,” although in true Derridean fashion, it appears to be both (5). The specter of the dead black body to which Barrett points, along with the question of is-it-dead-or-is-it-alive, is visible in the holographic representation of Tupac’s torso from the 2012 Coachella Music Festival.

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The specter of Tupac’s body is made visible beginning with the top of his head, looking down, against a black background, but quickly refocuses to his torso, across which reads the identifying THUG LIFE tattoo. Juxtaposed with the glowing light of an ornate cross hanging from a necklace (Biggie’s Jesus-piece) and the glowing white of the figure’s underwear, markedly visible above the waist of his jeans, this Tupac-torso-spectre rocks back on his heels, nods, holds his arms up in anticipation of applause, and looks solemnly at the camera before he brings the mic to his lips and starts rapping. When he says “Yeah, you know what the fuck this is! What up, Dre?” he erases the unutterably jarring aspect of seeing a dead man come back to life. He also hails normalcy and familiarity - what up, Dre? - which is reinforced when Dre responds, What up, Pac?

This scene, in which a ghost and his old friend interact, could be that opening scene from *Hamlet*, in which the time is out of joint, and from which Derrida begins to formulate his theories of mourning. Mourning “consists always in attempting to ontologize remains, to make them present, in the first place by identifying the bodily remains...” (9). This identification — What up, Pac? — does not detract from the mourning process, or from Tupac being dead, any more than when Marcellus says, “Is it not like the king?” and Horatio responds, “As thou art to thyself.” The “irresistible desire for identification” that Derrida recognizes in this opening scene plays out in those first few moments from the hologram’s rise; the focus on Pac’s torso, with his famous THUG LIFE tattoo, both forces the identification process — see, it’s him, you know this body! — and shows us where that identification can take place — precisely on the (Black male) body.

The fetishization of the Black male torso too has a history in hip hop and R&B; the focus of LL Cool J’s “Paradise” video is his body, under the spray of a waterfall, splashing around, for a total of two of the video’s four minutes. Tellingly, LL Cool J shows more skin than his female singing partner, Amerie. Even more directly fetishistic, D’Angelo’s “Untitled (How Does It Feel)”

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(1999) video *only* has his naked body as the focal point. The camera scans up and down, from his smiling and singing face to focus on his abdominal muscles as they produce the breath that makes the sound. Again, the young, lithe, Black body on a black background rearticulates a value system, a recording concert industry that makes money from a process that sexualizes while it fragments, immobilizing one piece of a body by literally denying it legs.

Queering Hip Hop Temporalities

In their roundtable discussion of queer temporalities in GLQ’s special *Queer Temporalities* issue, Roderick Ferguson, Judith Halberstam, and Carla Freccero animate queer temporality in a way that illuminates how I see hip hop as potentially queering time. Ferguson calls for a palimpsestic, Derridean sense of time, of seeing layers of past meaning in contemporary queer, African American sociological formations (180). This palimpsestic approach to time would illuminate the layers of meaning present in the amplification of a holographic image: a hailing to the past, an effort to reproduce and renegotiate meaning in the present, as well as the reanimation of figures like the ‘gangsta’ or ‘rough rider’ whose historical valence hails from the 1990s. Far from having no meaning now, these figures have *more* meaning, layering reductive representations of impoverished Black American men with a re-animation of old images for new purposes, even while it’s possible that the new purpose is to reinforce the authenticity of an aging Dr. Dre. This palimpsestic understanding of Tupac’s hologram body, which situates itself in a hip hop history that argues both that Tupac was killed by the government and that he is still alive, places the hologram outside of Derrida’s

hauntology, which claims that “nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt” (9). Indeed, while work is taking place over this image, it is not the work of mourning, which is a working-through and, ultimately, a moving forward. The queer temporality of hip hop is both one of constant presence and one of afterness, one that insists on orienting itself both to the present and to always coming after death.

Freccero offers queer time as a relation to historicity “that could account for the affective force of the past in the present, of a desire issuing from another time and placing a demand on the present” (184). This affective force, both the fierce nostalgia for a more authentic “back in the day” and the constantly reiterated faux-mourning process, shows itself in the shock of seeing a dead man’s torso *and* the familiarity of Tupac to a generation for whom he has never been alive. That is, the “affective force of the past in the present” is most evident in the reactions of those fans for whom Tupac has only ever existed in the past tense. This is precisely what makes Tupac’s haunting different from Derrida’s hauntology, for all its illuminations: in comparing Hamlet and Marx, Derrida says, “everything begins by the apparition of a specter. More precisely, by the *waiting* for this apparition” (2). With Tupac’s hologram, there was no waiting. The crowd did not expect his presence, and for some of us, at least, it was shocking. It is worth noting that it was shocking for people who remembered when Tupac was alive; for others, it was mere representation, but a representation that they recognized with the affective force of the past.

But most compelling, I think, about thinking hip hop through a lens of queer temporality is the possibility of what Halberstam calls “a sexual practice whose time has past” (190). Halberstam said, “As someone who sexually identifies as a ‘stone butch,’ I am always surprised to hear that apparently there are no stone butches anymore! People often tell me that stone butch was an identity bound to the 1950s and apparently dependent on a pre-liberation understanding of lesbianism or queerness. Or, now I hear from younger trans folks that stone butchness can be ‘resolved’ by transitioning. So what does it mean to engage in a sexual practice whose time is past?” (190) In this conversation, Halberstam points to what is often presented as a progress narrative of queer time, wherein queerness emerges and is improved, while ‘old’ forms of sexuality are resolved through new, more progressive formations. The “sexual practice whose time has passed” for Halberstam is a queerness associated with a presumed gender binary, and the discomfort is identifying with that practice. Hip hop has been branded as a sexist, misogynistic genre; as a queer woman who loves hip hop, and not just homo hop, I am faced regularly with the question, But how do you listen to this genre that is so negative toward women, and queer folk in general?^[4] I want to offer that it is by engaging with past sexism that contemporary popular hip hop artists negotiate what it means to identify with a sexual practice whose time is past.

Hip hop's sampling culture brings back dead loved ones, or at least dead pioneers, regularly, but this taking up, like Hegel's *aufheben*, is both a preserving and a cancellation, a negating by taking up and making your own something that belonged to someone else. It is a fetishization, attempting to ossify meaning while also negotiating that meaning, which allows for the possibility of, rather than the guarantee of, new meanings. This simultaneous hero-worship and vexed inheritance can be seen in J. Cole's newest, most successful album, "Born Sinner." Named after a line from one of Biggie's most famous songs, "Juicy," the album slips in and out of Biggie's lyrics and samples even while explicitly pointing to J. Cole's relationship to Nas and Jay-Z. However, it is also an engagement with and acknowledgement of a sexual practice whose time is passing. In J. Cole's opening song, "Villuminati,"

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he hails the original Biggie song, the history of Black American music's use of gospel choirs, and a redemption narrative as the choir sings "I'm a born sinner, but I got better than that". Cole engages with redemption less explicitly as he treats homosexuality later in the song. He raps, "And I don't mean no disrespect whenever I say faggot, okay faggot? Don't be so sensitive. If you wanna get fucked in the ass that's between you and whoever else's dick it is. Pause. Maybe that line was too far. Just a little joke to show how homophobic you are..." I offer this line not because I think it shows that hip hop is no longer homophobic, nor to present J. Cole as a 'progressive' or 'conscious' rapper, although those things may exist. I argue that J. Cole shows ambivalence as he engages precisely with what Halberstam calls "a sexual practice whose time has past." He knows there is such a thing as going too far, and he wants to claim that he means no disrespect as a way of avoiding that 'too far,' but he appears unclear as to what respectful would look like, and falls back on accusing the listener of homophobia, possibly as a pre-emptive defense against the same accusation. Although I would not argue that stone butch lesbian is a thing that no longer exists, I have heard that argument from younger queer and trans folks. I have also seen, particularly with younger hip hop heads, a growing discomfort with the misogyny and sexism that even their favorite 'back in the day' artists represent. Like Halberstam, I'm not sure what it means to identify with, or identify in response to, a sexual practice whose time has past. And I think J. Cole is equally unsure.

In this annotated playlist, I mean to suggest the ways that queering noise is already taking place across hip hop's spectrum, in terms of sexuality, temporality, and bodily representation. We can hear that queering in the ways hip hop uses 'the break' — that highly significant lack, that moment of silence that disrupts the expectations of the listener and makes space for a soloist within the group dynamic. Hip hop is composed of disruptions in time. We can hear echoes of what Ellison asserts as the value of spending time listening to Louis Armstrong, when "[i]nstead of the swift and imperceptible flowing of time, you are aware of its nodes, those points where time stands still or from which it leaps ahead. And you slip into the breaks and look around" (7).

My argument, that hip hop has been provoking questions of sexuality, noise, and representation, isn't to discount the importance of such an investigation; indeed, it shows that investigation's necessity. Similarly, scholars of noise and militarization like Steve Goodman articulate their work in relationship to hip hop and sound studies. Goodman explicitly states he will not undertake "a detailed analysis of the innovative politics of black noise and militarized stance of Public Enemy and the martial arts mythologies of the Wu Tang Clan," which indicates precisely that such a consideration "could fit snugly" into an analysis of the militarization of sound and noise, that such an analysis is necessary. This short annotated playlist argues that the queerness of hip hop's position has to do with its simultaneous place as the revolutionary or radical future of music and its apotheosis (as noise), as savior and disgrace. Hip hop forces us to consider a queering of temporality that takes up a history of Black music in America, 'signifiyin' outside normative race relations, normative sexuality, and normative temporality.

Notes

1. 'Signifiying' is defined by Kermit E. Campbell as "a way of rendering powerless through language an uncompromising oppressor." It is often linked with what Zora Neale Hurston called "feather-bed resistance," allowing an oppressor to feel like they have gotten hold of someone's mind when actually all they've got is what that person put forward for them to have. This is linked directly to the genre of "Signifying Monkey" stories, a performative genre that Campbell terms "narrative poems... with a twist ending of some sort".
2. This runs the gamut from Son House's "Levee Camp Moan" to Howlin' Wolf's "Little Red Rooster" to Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Texas Flood," among myriad others.
3. Ocean posted a picture to his Tumblr of a text document he had written on an airplane in December of 2011. The document tells the story of his first love, a man with whom things did not work out as he'd wanted, and expresses his gratitude for that first love.
<http://www.complex.com/music/2012/07/frank-ocean-comes-out-as-bisexual>
4. "Homo hop" is one name given to the nascent and burgeoning genre of hip hop made by and for queer folks. While Frank Ocean is not often included in this category, Big Freedia is.

Discography

1. [Public Enemy, "Bring the Noise"] <1BringTheNoise.Mp3>
2. [Ma Rainey, "Prove It On Me Blues"] <2ProveItOnMeBlues.mp3>
3. [Frank Ocean, "Thinkin Bout You"] <3ThinkinBoutYou.M4a>
4. [Biggie Smalls, "Life After Death"] <4LifeAfterDeath.mp3>

5. [Sugar Hill Gang, “Rapper’s Delight”] <5RappersDelight.mp3>
6. [Tupac Hologram, Dr Dre, and Snoop, “Ride or Die, Coachella 2012”] <6Coachella.mp3>
7. [D’Angelo, “Untitled (How Does It Feel?)”] <7HowDoesItFeel.mp3>
8. [J. Cole, “Villuminati”] <8Villuminati.mp3>

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Universities in Question

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Cultural Studies should be... unsettled

Rob Gehl

Several people have asked for the text of my 3-minute plenary talk at the CSA. Bruce Burgett, the CSA president, asked CSA members to contribute to the plenary by responding to this prompt:

- Cultural Studies should...
- Cultural Studies is...
- Cultural Studies could...

I approached this with my own idiosyncratic biography, anxieties, and hopes in mind. It is not meant to be taken seriously. I also wanted to approach it as a sort of Latour litany. Here is what I said:

- Cultural Studies should be unkempt, unsavory, disturbing.
- It should speak Spanish to French philosophers.
- It should quote Marx in board meetings.
- It should swear in polite company.
- It should wear muddy boots and drink whiskey in the art gallery.
- It should take pleasure in popular culture when others are critical, and it should critique pop culture when others get too comfortable.
- Cultural studies should not resign itself to adjunct positions, but it should instead agitate for benefits and full-time work for contingent faculty, as well as faculty unions and faculty governance.
- Cultural studies should never just say “Race, Class, and Gender” as if they were Hail Marys that absolve us of sin.
- It should not repeat things as if they were mantras. It should instead question how such repetitions arise.
- CS should infiltrate other fields, steal ideas from them, change them from within like double agents.
- CS should point out who’s actually doing the work at the catered party. Hint: it’s not the host.
- CS should theorize about the world as it can be, not just the world as it is.

- CS should read those theorists and authors who are declared “off limits” by other fields.
- CS should synthesize ideas that everyone knows are irreconcilable.
- CS should pirate everything it possibly can get away with.
- CS should give its knowledge away to anyone who wants it.
- CS should do interviews with journalists.
- CS should do interviews with Bill O'Reilly and tell him to shut up for once.
- CS should regularly declare where stuff comes from.
- CS should be a tour guide to where stuff is dumped.
- CS should keep secrets and be anonymous, and work behind the scenes.
- CS should make animated GIFs and wear day glow clothes.
- It should not limit itself to 140 characters.
- It should not have a Facebook profile or a LinkedIn account.
- It should not go to conferences to network, but rather go to conferences to drop off socialist propaganda.
- It should go to socialist meetings and drop off libertarian propaganda.
- It should put political organizing on its CV.
- It shouldn't play so many video games.
- It should make video games.
- It should be methodologically anarchistic.
- It should study boring things and find beauty in them.
- It should study beautiful things and find terror in them.
- When Cultural Studies speaks, presidents should choose early retirement.
- Cultural studies should be: unsettled.

Undisciplined

Christina Nadler

cultural studies should be a political act against the institutionalizing processes of becoming disciplined

disciplining disciplines are what have produced the need for cultural studies

as a response to the limiting of disciplines and their necessary exclusions, cultural studies emerges to respond, undisciplined, to the problems of what has been left out

cultural studies must remain undisciplined, or it ironically reproduces the circumstances that led to its creation and produces its own redundancy

ways to remain undisciplined are to

resist canonization and to

resist asserting certain methods as our own

we must be flexible

we must also practice our theories, not just apply them through methods

understanding both cultural theory and cultural method as a practice makes them necessarily unable to be disciplined

because practice is never fixed or final

to facilitate this undisciplined becoming of cultural studies we can understand it, and practice it as a

field

not a discipline, but a field above and below and unbounded by the disciplining of disciplines

cultural studies

could become a field

is a field

was always already a field

this field is like a plane of immanence

smooth unstructured space

as deleuze and guattari* describe the field of immanence,

“

there are only

complex networks of forces,

particles,

connections,

relations,

affects and

becomings...

there are only

relations of

movement and rest,

speed and slowness

between unformed elements....

there are only

haecceities,

affects,

subjectless individuations that
constitute collective assemblages

”

of course, this is not how everyone understands cultural studies

cultural studies

could become disciplined

is disciplined

was always already disciplined

but i see the undisciplined potential in cultural studies like a body without organs

in understanding cultural studies like a body without organs we see that we are productive

that our measures are productive

that we are in a quantum entanglement with culture

and like desire we produce it

we are not removed from it, lacking it, and looking in on it.

as foucault* has said the intellectual's role is not to report on the truth of the masses but

it “is to struggle against the forms of power that transform us into its object and
instrument in the sphere of "knowledge," "truth," "consciousness," and "discourse””

we must resist the forms of power that seek to discipline cultural studies

and that includes us as we will be the ones to do this especially when

we privilege certain requirements for

publications,

funding, and

tenure,

and indeed the academy itself.

if we do resist the putting up of fences we will have the space to

work and play

desire and produce

theorize and practice

on and of

this immanent field of cultural studies

*a thousand plateaus

*intellectuals and power

Q3C

Jamie "Skye" Bianco

Cultural Studies would, could, should, must, will, and does begin queerly in the middle of things.

Queer

Creative

Critical

Compositionism

Practices. Practical research. Artistic research. Political research. Public practice. Interventionist. Engaged processes. Inquiry rather than forms. Thinking, learning through making. Through multimodal practices. Through public multimodal practice.

Practices that pick up in the middle of the remains. The remains of capital. The remains of critical education and the so-called crisis in the academy, and the so-called crisis in the academy, and the so-called crisis in the academy,.

In the remains of human and nonhuman catastrophes, finance swindles, extra-natural climatizations, foreclosures of homes, futures, and political actions, debt-driven labor and consumption, and the bloated corporatization of communications, sociality and media.

In the affections, the affects and controls of instrumental deployments of technologies, always already bio-technologies overgrowth-ing everywhere. And, if we are honest, in the dwindling provocations, the remains of critical studies, meant to unveil, reveal, expose and somehow (but how?) correct the social injustices.

How to expose what is over-exposed, surveilled, documented and always-already google-able? How might we practice teaching in the big data flood? Should our critical pedagogies bring on more crises in a series of derivative capitalisms that thrive on crises?

What interventions, media and critical, won't add to the heaped up remains upon which trash capitalism feeds now? We are not at a break, but rather in a pile-up, of remnants, remains, offal, composed as data, trash, connectivity, devastation, so-called "recovery" and debt. We

must make something of these heaps. We must tool affect from allure and re-engage aesthetics to the critical materialist and cultural studies projects. We must become literate in the languages, practices and substrates that govern economics, politics and the social.

In this we must become experimental, practical, public and multimodal in our knowledge-makings. We must make, in critical engagement, and this making necessitates our pedagogies offer, at the least, basic literacies in the making methods and modes of our historical moment: integrated communications technologies, software and hardware, and the languages that move through them, and rhetorical and aesthetic tactics, critical readings made into makings, the affordances of digital media. This I call

Queer Creative Critical Compositionism.

Academic

Megan Turner

Cultural studies should be a deliberate site of sustained and sustainable struggle. At a time when our institutions—public and private alike—are increasingly co-opted by corporate interests and neoliberal regimes of power, resistance is not enough. We must go beyond critiquing what exists and imagine and enact new forms of knowledge production and intellectual community that directly challenge the exclusionary binaries through which the university defines itself. Distinctions between student and professor, academic and non-academic, theory and practice, knowledge-producer and knowledge-consumer—these binaries foreclose possibilities for opening up potentially liberatory educational spaces, for engaging with community-based knowledges and for hacking futures beyond the privatizing logic of the neoliberal state.

So let it be known:

Cultural studies refuses to privilege research that is apolitical, ahistorical, elitist, immaterial, heteronormative, homonormative, generally normative, ostensibly objective, or otherwise invested in the idea of “pure knowledge” (whatever that means). Rather than trying to speak for those on the margins, cultural studies provides a space of intellectual collaboration and genuine dialogue with those communities that have been systematically denied access to the university—working class, queer and differently-abled communities and communities of color. Instead of defining the “academic” in opposition to the “real world,” cultural studies recognizes that academic work must respond to the “real world” and provide concrete tools for negotiating and understanding the uneven formations of power underlying its structural inequalities.

So let it be known:

Cultural studies is an epistemology of struggle. Knowledge is inseparable from the material and ideological conditions from which it emerges, but those conditions, in turn, are shaped and reinforced by the research produced within the university. By providing critical tools for mapping out existing formations of power, cultural studies speaks to the needs and experiences of our communities. Far from abstract, theory provides a concrete means of resistance and possibility.

So let it be known:

Cultural studies is a weapon for identifying and tearing down institutional formations of power that are racist, elitist, ablest, patriarchal, and homophobic in nature. So I call upon everybody in this room to take up knowledge production as a site of struggle intimately tied to the struggles being waged in the streets and in the workplace, in agricultural fields and in prison cells. Our work begins right here, right now, in spaces like this. Another university is possible.

Cultural Studies Should Gamify

Stephen J. Luber

This idea has already been broached at last night's plenary by Eileen Joy, with her idea of returning to serious play in discourse and practice, and also in today's member meeting, with expanding the scope of the conference.

That is why I've created GamifytheCSA.org, an experiment in gamifying the academic conference. Gamifying the CSA will enhance both of these impulses, with models in business and social networking with programs such as FourSquare, and extending to health and fitness, with programs such as Zombies, Run!, and the list goes on.

Jane McGonigal, in her book *Reality Is Broken*, identifies two key benefits to the gamification phenomenon: clarity of goals and immediacy of reward. She writes, "Compared with games, reality is pointless and unrewarding. Games help us feel more rewarded for making our best effort."

Academic conferences present similar problems to reality: the goals are at best abstract, and the rewards are at best deferred. Moreover, our exchanges seem to exist synchronically, only in the magical space-time of the conference, and then disappear, only to be all but reset the next year.

My goal with Gamify the CSA is to address these concerns: to understand and address the objectives of conference exchanges and to maintain the same level of consistent engagement that we bring to our classrooms or whittle away time with on Facebook and Twitter.

Even in its nascent stages, thanks to lots of feedback from fellow gamers, Gamify the CSA has already allowed participants to post and share their papers for those who, for one reason or another, cannot be present for their panels, to announce and promote events both professional and social, and to enable debates and discussions long after our time is up here in Chicago. It also provides positive reinforcement for making connections, engagement, and decorous, positive conference behavior with a forum I've labeled "Instant Karma!"

I hope the site will allow for continuity between CSA conferences, enable conversation and collaboration, and deepen our discourse.

So please, go to GamifytheCSA.org, register, and explore for five minutes, five months, or five years. Explore the site's capabilities, and you may just get rewarded for all your hard work here.

And I've come in under time here, for which I shall reward myself [play music].

Spontaneous Acts of Scholarly Combustion

Eileen A. Joy

. . . how can [art] be a reaction to the Other instead of its medium? How must we act when yesterday's transgressions are today's commodities? . . . Through the appropriation of data and redistribution of value. By leaking and silently exposing the brutalities of institutionalized practices. Not by elevating ourselves and our personal gratification, not by getting too comfortable, but by becoming imperceptible, blending into the artwork itself, by operating in the recesses of established order.

~ Andreas Burckhardt, A Sanctuary of Sounds¹

For a very long time, and especially in my academic-activist work as it currently manifests itself in the directing of the BABEL Working Group and punctum books,² my vision of the university and the public commons it helps to constitute has been inspired by words written in Foucault's Preface and the translator's Introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus (and obviously directly inspired by that work). These are, as it were, the starting premises for what might be called as-yet still unrealized futures for cultural-intellectual life and thought. First, from Foucault's Preface, we have the idea that "the art of living counter to all forms of facism . . . carries with it a certain number of essential principles," such as,

- Develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization.
- Withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and access to reality. Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic.
- Do not think that one has to be sad in order to be militant³

Second, from Mark Seem's Introduction, and quoting Ivan Illich, we are told that, "we must learn to construct tools for conviviality through the use of counterfoil research," and further, that we must work to develop lifestyles and political systems that would "give priority to the protection, the maximum use, and the enjoyment of the one resource that is almost equally distributed among all people: personal energy under personal control."⁴

So what I want to pose today is the hypothesis that the future of academic publishing, as well as its ability to create and sustain publics, rests upon its willingness to take up these principles and directives, especially with regard to the protection, maximum use, and enjoyment of "personal energy under personal control." You hear a lot of discussion about the importance and necessity of academic freedom, especially in the thousands of op-ed pieces that have been written defending tenure as a supposed guarantee of academic freedom, but to my mind, nothing is so lacking in the university and academic publishing today as freedom -- freedom of thought? In the quiet of your office and maybe in your classroom? Sure. But freedom of the practices and modes of expression of that thought? The "principal right," as Derrida once argued, "to say everything, whether it be under the heading of fiction and the experimentation of knowledge, and the right to say it publicly, to publish it"?⁵

Hardly. Derrida's university "without condition" is a futural project, one that Derrida claimed could take place tomorrow, and that tomorrow, as far as I am concerned, is now. The future, of necessity, needs to remain always open to the unforeseen -- this is the matter, and the determinative time of justice -- but there is no reason to defer everything. Certain decisions can be made -- every day, in fact -- that can be designed to keep the future productively open, which is also a way to keep the Now creatively messy and unsettled. This will also mean understanding that the other critical term here, in addition to freedom, is responsibility. Someone, or some distributive collectives of someones, which might also form a nomadic para-institution, or "outstitution," needs to take responsibility for securing this freedom for the greatest number of persons possible who want to participate in intellectual-cultural life. A publisher is a person, or a group, or a multiplicity, who is responsible.

Let's distinguish, too, as Paul Boshears has urged, between "publishing" -- "making stuff knowable" -- and "publication" as "public-making," which is a process . . . the process of saturating,"⁶ of instantiating and also drenching with writings many publics. Publication would thus be focused on creating tools and platforms and holding areas (some call these books, journals, zines, weblogs, podcasts, etc.), around which certain communities might coalesce, and be sustained. And a "press" would be that which, following the word's Old French etymology, serves as the imprinting device, but also as the pressing "crush" of the crowd into the commons. The university -- and the presses associated with it -- will hopefully continue to serve as one important site for the cultivation of thought and cultural studies more broadly, but increasingly its space is so striated by so many checkpoints, watchtowers, and administrative procedures, that truly radical modes of publishing are difficult to pursue and develop. One has to do only a brief survey of all of the new academic

publishing initiatives cropping up everywhere -- partly due to, on the one hand, a genuine enthusiasm for digital and open-access and post-monograph publishing modes, and on the other hand, the fears and anxieties that coalesce around such new directions, and on yet another (third) hand, the almost anxious hyper-reaction to governmental and university mandates that would dictate open-access publishing as compulsory -- and one will see that, whether we are talking about shorter-form e-book series & e-serials, such as Stanford Briefs, Princeton Shorts, and Palgrave Pivot, or “born-digital” publishing consortiums such as Anvil Academic or Open Library of Humanities, or open-access platforms for more traditional but also experimental forms of the book and the serial, such as Open Humanities Press, that a concern for certain forms of what I will call elite and bureaucratic-managerial academic oversight still exist (with few exceptions).

Whether traditional old-school or forward-leaning progressive in its publishing methods, the academy always seeks its own imprimatur as a sign of so-called legitimacy. And it always talks in the language of austerity (like, “monographs only for tenure!” or more recently, “fuck monographs; it’s all just one huge digital mega-journal from now on and everyone can aggregate their own books and cataloguing systems using Mendeley!”). What we need now are illegitimate publishers willing to build shelters for illegitimate publics, which is to say, public-ations, hellbent on pressing a rowdy and unruly crowd of ideas into the ventilating system of this place we call the University-at-large, an Academy of Thought (and also, thought-practices) that is not bound by the specific geographic co-ordinates of specific schools and colleges, but which insists, nevertheless, on playing the shadow-demon-parasite-prod-supplement to the University-proper (its para-mour/more). What we need now is an excess of thought, an excess of modes and forms of public-ation. There are no epistemic boundaries or principles worth guarding; there is no good reason to put a limit to thought within the setting of the Academy of Thought; one must allow in the mad, the chimeric, the deviant, the teratological.

The University remains; it remains as remains. But now may be the time for a subter-fugitive, vagabond, gypsy para-humanities, especially at a time when so many of us are barely hanging on to the university by the skin of our teeth (or hands or minds). punctum books was founded as an exercise and experiment in convivial and not-sad militancy of open thought, in refusing allegiance to the old categories of the Negative, to publication itself as an art of living, of maximizing “personal energies under personal control.” We embrace a radical, polyglot cosmopolitanism that enunciates a “shaggy heart,”² and like the practitioners of Hakim Bey’s amour fou, we strive to be “illegal,” “saturating” ourselves with our own aesthetic, engaging in publishing ventures that would fill themselves “to the borders” with “the trajectories of [their] own gestures,” running “on angels’ clocks,” and never tilting at fates fit for “commissars & shopkeepers.”³ One of the things we have lost sight of in the university, and especially in our publishing practices, is the importance of play -- now is the time, again cadging from Hakim Bey, to “share the mischievous destiny” of runaways, “to

meet only as wild children might, locking gazes across a dinner table while adults gibber from behind their masks.”⁹ Without non-utilitarian play, and without the right to flail, flounder, and fail while playing, we risk the frigid stasis of the status quo, of always being trapped in what has already been said (the literal definition of “fate”), what has already been played out. How did we get here? How did the creative arts get so thoroughly de-cathected from the “liberal” arts? How will we give birth to heretic-misfit love-child thoughts without unbridled play?¹⁰ Publishing, then, and public-ation, as taking more seriously the phrase, field of play.

For me, the most exciting publishing and dissemination ventures going right now are those such as continent., Speculations, Itineration, Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies, D.U.S.T. (the Dublin Unit for Speculative Thought), Uitgeverij [‘Publisher’], the Department of Eagles (Tirana, Albania), the Organism for Poetic Research (OPR), the Bruce High Quality Foundation, The Public School New York, the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research, and so on -- journals, presses, and alternative research-educational organizations entirely run and managed by graduate students and post-graduates (and some faculty collaborators) with no external financial support to speak of and only tenuous footholds in the university (our academic precariat), and who are publishing or fostering some of the most exciting work in the humanities and arts right now, work that eschews and also troubles the waters of disciplinary genre, “review,” privilege, and status. It is one of the aims of punctum books to assist these and other new (extra- but also para-institutional) initiatives with various forms of regular and longer-term support (economic, editorial, aesthetic, technical, promotional, etc.), but who is paying for this? No one; at least, no one “official.” We’ve simply scraped together what we have; we’re running on the steam of an international all-volunteer staff and gift-share economies, also martinis, WD-40, loose change, old Talking Heads albums, matches, a glitter ball, and chewing gum. And yet, we actually believe that an open-access and print-on-demand model (in which all of our publications are both free and available for purchase) may actually lead to something like financial solvency (we’ll call that, not profits, but sustainability) and even jobs, but we’re not making that a condition of our future plans.

We aim to grow through a vast network of talented persons dedicated to radically independent publishing ventures that would not be beholden to any specific university or commercial academic interest, and to fostering the broadest possible range of open-access print- and e-based platforms for the sustenance of what we are calling a “whimsical para-humanities assemblage” -- an assemblage, moreover, that refuses to relinquish any possible form of public-ation: the making of cultural- intellectual stealth “publics” that would seep in and out of institutional and non-institutional spaces, hopefully blurring the boundaries between “inside” and “outside,” an ultimate fog machine. And we are also intent on

resuscitating what we are calling postmedieval and pastmodern forms of publication (from breviary and commentary and florilegium to telegram and liner notes and inter-office memo, from the Book of Hours to the cassette mixtape).

Public-ation, then, as also salvage operation, the re- purposing of discarded objects, discarded forms, discarded genres, as a means for maximizing the possibilities for thinking. Forms matter. The forms of thinking matter. In the plural. Again, it is a commitment to excess, and a refusal of all austerity measures. We're not interested either in the maintenance of specific genres or disciplines (is it literary theory? poetry? philosophy? art history? memoir? sociology? cybernetics? speculative fiction? code? who can tell?), and thus we take seriously Derrida's belief in a university "without condition."

As the authors of the recently-inked "Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics" aver, there may be no possible stemming of the tide of neoliberal capital's narrow- minded "imaginary" and hyper-accelerated technologized infrastructure; therefore, the task now might be, how to hijack and "re-purpose" this infrastructure to different ends and unleash new, more capacious imaginaries?¹¹ In this scenario, there is room for an aesthetic avant-garde that, in McKenzie Wark's words, will "have to reimagine possible spaces for alter-modernities Just as the Situationists imagined a space of play in the interstitial spaces of the policing of the city via the *dérive*, so too we now have to imagine and experiment with emerging gaps and cracks in the gamespace that the commodity economy has become."¹² This is not just a leftist-activist situation with regard to capitalism, it is also an academic situation, with regard to the managerial structure of the University, and it is one for which we are all responsible.

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Queering the archive

E. Patrick Johnson

When I began collecting the oral histories for my book, *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South—An Oral History*, a performance was the last thing on my mind. I was more interested in creating a written archive of life stories heretofore undocumented. It was not until after a year into the research and after meeting so many great storytellers that I realized that a performance was in order. For the page could not capture the vocal cadence, verbal ticks, non-verbal cues, and *intimacy* created through oral history performance. Initially, I considered adapting a script from the oral histories and casting a show of eight to twelve actors. After more thought, however, I decided not to stage a production with multiple cast members and instead make the show a solo piece with me performing excerpts from various narratives. I also made this decision because I saw it as an opportunity to use performance to ask larger questions about how to stage ethnographic fieldwork. For instance, how does moving the narratives from the printed page and the mostly private space of a reader to the stage with a public audience alter their meaning? What does the dramatization of the researcher's relationship to the subjects and to the audience reveal that the book version only implies? What are the ethics of performing these narratives in the absence of the narrators? These were somewhat different questions I pursued when analyzing a poem or piece of fiction. The stakes were different because the narratives are those of living people and, as Dwight Conquergood so aptly noted, "opening and interpreting lives and is not the same as opening and closing books." And yet, the attention to details of a text that literary analysis requires is a skill that is actually grounded in ethics—an ethics of care that propels one to "pay attention" to what the text is telling you. And it was this sense of detail that propelled me to think about performing the narratives of *Sweet Tea* in such a way that their complexity was communicated and my role as co-performative witness would be highlighted.

From thinking through this process came "Pouring Tea: Black Gay Men of the South Tell Their Tales," a traditional Reader's Theater rendering of the narratives, which I began to tour to colleges and universities around the country in 2006—even before *Sweet Tea* was published. In "Pouring Tea" I sit on the stage on a stool with a music stand and the script of the show and privilege the "voice" of the narrator—voice not just in the aesthetic sense, but also in the political sense. Since many of the men have never had a platform to speak, it was important

to me to focus the audience's attention on the story each man tells as a *political* act. Unlike a narrator in fiction, the stakes of these men telling their stories were high in the context of a conservative and sometimes hostile environment in the South. The conventions of Reader's Theater lend themselves well to a focus on narrative, but do not necessarily accommodate the self-reflexivity so common in performance ethnography. In other words, I also felt compelled to implicate myself in the storytelling event so as not to obfuscate the role I played as researcher in the moment of oral history performance. My challenge in "Pouring Tea," then, was to find a way to draw on performance conventions—e.g., adaptation, narrative theory, point of view, etc.—while also highlighting the ethical and political standards of performance ethnography. In other words, my challenge was to queer the notion of the archive through performance—or, to borrow from Diana Taylor, I wished to dismantle the archive/repertoire binary by focusing on my body as the site of both.

In the performance, I introduce each narrative with an audio clip from the original oral history interview that sometimes includes my asking questions. Preceding the clip is music that corresponds to the theme of the narrative I am about to perform (e.g., Diana's Ross' "I'm Coming Out" before a coming out story). In this way, the audience gets to hear the men's voices in relation to mine. Following the clip I provide biographical information about the narrator that I am about to perform and where the interview took place. After a brief pause, I then begin to perform the narrative in the voice of the narrator, but without fully embodying him and while referring to the text. To keep the audience from fully suspending disbelief, I do not excise the questions I asked in the original interview and sometimes abruptly drop "character" to ask a question.

The spatio-temporal elements of Reader's Theater in this context help facilitate drawing attention to the multiplicity of selves being performed: the narrator's voice spoken from his own mouth (on the audio clip) in the past, the performer's voice as omniscient narrator in the present, the narrator's voice in the past as represented through the performer in the present, and the performer's voice in the past as represented in the present. Indeed, I found that expanding the bounds of Reader's Theater provided a deeply engaging way to highlight ethical and political questions about oral history performance. Methodologically, it also provided a way for me to document ethnographic material that did not tilt too much in the direction of aestheticizing the political stakes of the narratives or of undermining the complexity of the intersubjective experience shared between researcher, the other, and the audience.

"Pouring Tea" morphed into a fully produced theater production in association with About Face Theater and the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media, Columbia College, Chicago in 2009. While I was flattered by the invitation and was excited by the possibilities of developing the next incarnation of the work, I was also circumspect about how the transition from a staged reading to a fully produced theater

production would potentially alter the intellectual, ethical, and political intentions of the work. Nonetheless, I worked with five artists—directors, actors, musicians—to workshop the script and to prepare the show for full production. All of the artists agreed on two things: I should get rid of the stool and music stand and that the show should remain a solo production. For them the stool and music stand were too limiting and that my relationship with the men is what made it different from other oral history theater pieces. Regarding this latter point, they also believed that the script needed more of my own story about being black, gay, and from the South.

The play gave me yet another opportunity not only to queer the archive, but also to queer difference. This was particularly true in my performance of Chaz/Chastity. In the version of the play that debuted in April 2010 in Chicago and directed by Daniel Alexander Jones, my stories were included alongside the men's, clustered together in episodic groupings under themes like "Survival of the Fittest" and "Church Sissies." Jones' direction was steeped in the theatrical jazz aesthetic, a non-Western theatrical aesthetic that, according to Omi Osun Joni Jones draws on presence, breath, listening, improvisation, simultaneous truths, collaboration, virtuosity, body-centeredness, and metamorphosis (6 -7).

Born Charles Danner in Newton, NC in 1969, Chaz is an African American pre-operative transgender who presents as a male on Sunday to sing in the church choir and presents as female Monday through Saturday while working at her beauty salon as a hairdresser. [Image 2 of "Chaz"] On occasion, "Chastity," [Image 3 of Chastity] Chaz's alter ego female impersonation character performs at a local gay bar. Because of these multiple forms of gender self-presentation, Chaz's narrative offers an opportunity to reconsider traditional transgender narratives that suggest that having reconstructive surgery makes one whole. Instead, she/he is content retaining male genitalia, living sometimes as male and sometimes as female, but not fully committing to either gender. I highlight how performance helps to frame this middle ground by analyzing my own portrayal of Chaz in my theater piece, SWEET TEA.

Here, in his own words, Chaz names his sexuality.

This is more than just an innocent malapropism, but rather a willful redeployment of "difference" as "indifference"—indeed, the equation of sexual orientation with "disinterest." Chaz's characterization of sexual difference as sexual *indifference* is key to how he/she divests transgenderism of its normativizing power. I do not mean to suggest here that Chaz's transgenderism is inauthentic, for he claims and embraces a transgender identity; yet, her performance of transgender transcends the transnormative narrative of trans identity in two significant ways. First, she is not interested in passing and second, she does not feel incomplete because she is pre-operative.

Daniel Alexander Jones' direction for Chaz's character in the show was meant to highlight Chaz's "indifference," meaning her absolute commitment to presenting as woman while simultaneously realizing that no matter how fierce she was, her biological body would be read as male.

In just the one gesture of putting on spectacular earrings, my embodiment of Chaz highlights gender incoherence and in turn positions the audience in the theater as one and the same as the people who see Chaz in the various places she goes. As with the people who see Chaz who aren't "quite sure what they are seeing" the audience in the theater aren't quite sure what they are seeing either, except both audiences are witnessing Chaz's indifference, her performance of incoherent gender. But how does one archive gender incoherence through performance?

In this excerpt from the play, Jones directs me as Chaz, Charles, and Chastity, to highlight through performance, all of these complicated negotiations of self-presentation.

Here, we see in performance how Charles shifts to Chastity as mediated by Chaz (who is represented through my body as the performer). More importantly, however, is how Chaz theorizes in Butlerian fashion the distinction between gender and sex. She questions if a vagina and long hair constitute being a woman or if a penis and facial hair constitute masculinity and declares that the answers to those questions reside within that space where biology and discourse reside in dialogic tension.

Jones' direction of me points out what Eve Sedgwick theorizes as "threshold effects," those "places where quantitative increments along one dimension can suddenly appear as qualitative differences somewhere else on the map entirely" (16), by having me perform as "Charles," who is suggested through stereotypical "masculine" posture and voice, but while still wearing the earrings and then shift to Chaz/Chastity through gestures learned from working with a skeleton, used in science classes. Here is a clip from that rehearsal of working with the skeleton.

That "nakedness" and "deep work" that Jones references and for which the skeleton is a metaphor, corroborates Chaz's conviction that the core of who we are—our bare bones—is also something that is ever evolving, as well as the body as queer archive. Through my body I conjure these men's memory of self; and my self-embodiment as E. Patrick the researcher and E. Patrick the character, "constitutes subjectivity in the interplay of memory, experience, identity, embodiment, and agency" (4). This interplay of memory, experience, identity, embodiment and agency are made manifest through performance, the site at which the practice of everyday life is framed and named as extraordinary in a moment of cultural and self-reflexivity—indeed, that place where the skeletal remains of queer memory reside.

PNAP talk

Sarah Ross

For the last 10 years my work has been concerned with a spatial politics-- how space and place is shaped, who has the right to occupy place, what material and cultural devices define boundaries and borders, and I'm interested in the social struggles that articulate a kind of city or region from below, or efforts that work toward a kind of local control of space and place.

About 2 years ago I moved to Chicago and was asked if I could teach a class at Stateville Prison. I'd just moved from central Illinois where for the last 5 years I'd been teaching art history at a prison. I had worked with the University of Illinois to start a college program at a prison, I facilitated reading groups in prison and more.

So I said yes.

Stateville was built in the 1920s and has one of the last round houses in the nation-- these are buildings built on the Jeremy Bentham model and was later theorized by Michael Foucault. The prison was built for about 1000 men but holds more than 1800. People in Stateville range in age from late teens to late 60's. Many people in Stateville will die there, they are serving extraordinarily long prison terms often for crimes that had they been sentenced in a different county or 20 years before, they'd be out.

I knew that my teaching one or four or 10 classes would not be enough and I started to ask other scholars and artists if they would also teach. Together, we started with almost nothing. The prison had a building that served as evidence of an education program that was once there.

But all that was left was one lonely, ready to retire GED teacher, Ms. Coleman. We called ourselves the Prison and Neighborhood Arts Project

and negotiated with the prison to give us rooms, tables, chairs and bookcases. From there we started to collect books for a small library--

in Illinois the state cut funding for prison libraries back in 2002 and before that interlibrary loans were eliminated. So incarcerated people are really cut off from the most basic resources. Over the last year we've organized classes + workshops on a semester schedule. We don't have a credit program-- it's actually really difficult to get a university or college to take this kind of project on--- so until we can get a for credit program in place, we are at the liberty to teach what we want.

This year we have taught visual art and writing classes such as "Political Poetries", "Visual Stories", "Art of the Letter"; "Coming of Age Narratives"; and humanities classes "Intro to Feminism" "Poor People's Movements" and more.

We also organize a guest lecture series.... this idea was developed after a conversation between one of our collaborators who worked with a formerly incarcerated man who said that years ago when he was in prison there used to be people who came in and gave lectures-- and it had introduced him to new ideas.

We've hosted more than 15 guest lecturers ranging from Civil rights activist and Mississippi freedom rider Diane Nash, to the Executive Director for the center for wrongful convictions, Rob Warden, to artists like Michael Rakowitz and Laurie Palmer to formerly incarcerated people like Benny Lee.

Finally, we'll host annual exhibitions-- and our first one is scheduled for Oct.

So at the exhibition, We'll show visual work and hold readings of work that has been developed in classes. We will also host round table discussions and hold screenings around issues of mass incarceration.

I want to recognize all the people that have made this happen-- Ben Almassi, Aviva Futorian, Erica Meiners, Jill Petty, Claire Pentecost, Gabriel Villa, Fred Sasaki, Nadya Pittendrigh, Tess Landon, Daniela Olzewelka and many more people-- these folks are from a few organizations like the Poetry Foundation, John Howard Association.. and colleges and universities across the city but they volunteer their time to work on this project.

But how did all of us get out to stateville?

To get to Stateville, we drive down the I-55 fwy which is a industrial corridor. It's an *atypical* drive. Most prisons in the state were built during a boom of prison construction in the 1980s and 1990s (Illinois built 25 prison facilities in those two decades alone)

the prisons were built in far flung locations like Joliet, Vienna, Taylorville, Shawnee and other small towns across the state. Thus, our drive to Stateville is quite unique. Along the freeway is a range of industries like INtegrated INdustries Corporation, Barr Transportation

Network, CBSL Transportation Services, UPS, La Grou Distribution Services, Pierce Distribution Services, Roadlink Intermodal Logistics, APL Logistics and more. From the seat of the car we can see mega-warehouses for RR Donnelly, Home Depot, Quantam Foods, JMK Handtools, D and H Computer parts and service.

An article from Midwest Real Estate News in 2012 stated:

“Several submarkets throughout the Chicago industrial market have reported strong results....but none seem better positioned for growth than the southwest I-55 corridor. The growth of the SW I-55 corridor has been nothing short of amazing during the past 20 years....the roughly 10-mile span of I-55 ... has transformed from vast empty cornfields to roughly 60 million square feet of industrial facilities. During the hottest periods of real estate activity recorded from 1997 - 2000 and again from 2004 - 2007, nearly 45 million square feet of new space was added to this submarket..... “

This area, built over the last 25 years constitutes one of the world's largest and busiest intermodal facilities where products are transferred from barge or train to trucks for distribution. Chicagoland is the number one container handler in the Western Hemisphere with 25 intermodal facilities. Will County, the county that Stateville prison is in, is now home to the biggest intermodal facility in the region called Logistics Park Chicago. It was built with 150 million dollars of public funds and is situated in a Foreign Trade Zone which is a area outlined as juridically outside of US customs territory so it offers discounted fees and tariffs to companies. There are an estimated 150,000 workers who load and move products in these facilities they are often referred to as “Perma-Temp” meaning they are laid-off and re-hired under temporary contracts-- The companies that own the warehousing and supply chains keep labor costs low and un-unizionable through contracting with temp. agencies who hire, fire and re-hire workers.

So how did we get here???

In 1980 one of every 800 people in the U.S. was in prison or jail. In 1980 the national prison population at the time of 350,000 was declining.

Today one of every 99 people in the U.S. are in prison or jail (not including the thousands held by U.S. Marshals and Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE). 2.3 million people are incarcerated today.

- 70% of people in prison are people of color.
- 60% of people in prison are illiterate

- 10% are women of all races
- 2.7 million children have parents that are in prison.
- More than half of all state prisoners reported an income of less than \$2000/month prior to their arrest.
- 20,00 to 30,000 thousand people in U.S. Prisons are held in solitary confinement at any given time-- a practice that is torture.

Sex offenders are often held in confinement for decades in administrative units, after serving their sentence, with no option of parole.

In other words people in prison are black and brown, they uneducated, underemployed, they poor men and women and their families and communities often 'do time' with them.

In the 1980s and 1990s this state, Illinois-- and I'm sure your state too-- was busy building prisons and passing laws to confine people for longer and longer prison terms, while industry was busy off shoring factory labor and building intermodal networks to connect products made elsewhere to people in the region.

Between 1985 and 2010 new drug laws imposed longer or more severe sentences, and any 'good time' served in prison was eliminated meaning that there is no reduction of sentences for any rehabilitative work that people in prison do. As such, people spend much longer time in prison than they or even the state's budget offices anticipated.

In 1994, Bill Clinton signed a federal crime bill act that:

--created 60 new offense eligible for the death penalty

--funded 100,000 new police officers

--dedicated 9.7 billion for prison building and 6. 1 billion for prevention programs and

--The bill also eliminated the pell grant to people in prison. At that time there were over 700 college programs in more than 1100 state prisons. All but a handful of those programs closed. Also in 1994 Bill Clinton brokered the North America Free Trade Agreement (or NAFTA). In that decade, the US worked in partnership with Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (or APEC), we negotiated the US-Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the US-Vietnam bilateral trade agreement, and helped China enter the World Trade Organization.

During this same time the protection for workers and wages has decreased. As the example I stated with warehouse workers in the industrial corridor, they are unable to unionize and their average wage is 11 dollars an hour.

Finally, one other juxtaposition: during this 25 year period, more and more people are moving to cities, while the industrial corridor and prisons are built outside of the city, out of our view, off our radar.

So as a way to understand how do we get to Stateville-- I'd like to keep these two examples in mind.

When first I was asked to teach at Stateville I thought it was important work that could forge solidarities and after teaching in prison for 6 years I knew that men in prison were smart, they had keen ideas about the world around them, they acutely understood racism, violence, their own mistakes, oppression and they had something to say about it. I knew that people in prison self-educated, created informal knowledge systems among themselves in order to understand complex ideas in the face of intense repression from guards -- in other words any group of men who might get together to talk about a books or trade writing so that they could help each other learn writing skills, if caught would go to segregation. They make do with what they have with an utter lack of resources and little help from the outside. I also knew that no matter what kinds of programs or educational opportunities there were in prison, no matter how many garden projects or theatre programs existed at the end of the day prison is still a cage.

This fact is evidenced again and again as education or vocational programs and even recreational resources for incarcerated people have been eliminated by the state. So with our small group, we want to develop a project that connects scholars, artists, activists and people in prison to create a kind of exchange that could flow beyond the walls and into the public sphere. We recognize that we we must both recreate what the state has eliminated but do it with a deep knowledge of the mechanisms of control, we must do it much better with a sense of solidarity and a vision of decarceration and justice.

We must keep in view what has been designed out, what has been spatially organized off our paths and ask questions about about how we can use our institutions, our skills and knowledge to collaborate with incarcerated people, workers and other segregated groups to create new visions.

La Perrouque

Gerald Powell

The machine and their Western business practices (WBP) model share much in common with the orbit of a carousel; they continually move according to their own spastic algorithmic rhythm. Their entrance and exit points, like a circle's circumference—lines carefully balanced, are visibly indistinguishable. *La Perruque*, Michel de Certeau's modern-day proletariat, is entrenched in the same chicanery. Tasked with defusing or "making do," the mapless minefield of his place of employment, *la perruque*, without promise of a transparent user manual, camouflages his vexation by encoding his ways of operating in order to remain complicit and compliant. To the extent that I wish to retain employment and any remaining sanity, I choose to write with an anonymous pen. If there is an argument or *telos* to be found on or between the lines, it follows the passion of Nietzsche's mad man or Camus's revolt. Intended for *la perruque*, this is a *user's manual* that critically examines the intricacies of the academic employment process, from the interview to the chicaneries that one endures during his at-will tenure. And so, this manifesto is not only a creative, autobiographical account of how I have so far tactically revolted or "made do" and am surviving the prodding and churning of the *machine*, it also is one of many portraits that collectively paint an encouraging picture of human resistance. It all begins with the job announcement.

Job Announcement

The department of philosophy at The Adventist University (TAU) invites applicants for a department chair position. This is a full-time teaching position, which begins August 2012, that requires a teaching load of five courses each semester. The primary teaching responsibilities include: Introduction to Philosophy and the Printing Press, Critical Analysis (utilizing cultural, feminist, Marxist, postmodern, psychoanalytic, and semiotic approaches), and Winning Souls according to Ellen G. White.¹

The Interview

Scene 1: Mounted on the wall was an eerie silhouette of the great prophet. 147.05 sq. ft. by 13.66 sq. ft. measures the dimension of the short-circuit, dimly lit Ellen Conversion Room. BzZz..BzZz...BzZz. With each palpitation of light, the demonic, possessed image of the great prophet disembalms, keloiding and receding into the walls. Professor Andrew, nervously

waiting, brushes his neck with his left pointer finger only to find a smither of blood. Enter the six devoted faculty members—followers of Ellen (meat free, caffeine free, and sexed free), cloaked in cultish, black Faustian garb, with an upside-down crucifix made from acacia wood around their necks—who share the good news of The General Conference (TGC) to hire/convert Dr. Andrew for the position of department chair of philosophy. Unbeknownst to Prof. Andrew, the TGC has taken a blood sample and filtered it into the proverbial “birth pen.” His signature is an unbreachable contract. The game begins.

Dr. Bates [chair of the Conversion Committee]: Prof. Andrew, the department of philosophy endorses your application and has recommended that TGC support our decision to hire you as chair of the philosophy department. After a few perfunctory signatures and samples, the conversion will be complete. [Dr. Bates orgasmically exhales, lips quivering “Ellen’s will, Ellen’s will.”]

Prof. Andrew: [Needling, gyrating, and cavity-checking his person for a pen, each pocket seemingly a complex maze of dead ends] Without fail, yes, here it is, my lu...ck...y [between the short /u/ and the digraph ck, his tongue goes mute.] pen! I mean...*mon stylo sentiment. Pardon mon, français.*

Dr. Bates: *Bien.* Sure, Prof. Andrew. In keeping with tradition, all new converts sign with a birth pen. *Pardon le expression si tu plais.* We are a small university, so we want all of our new converts to feel appreciated. It’s a personal touch—your personal touch—and our way of saying welcome to the family!

Prof. Andrew: Dr. Bates, I am a recreational connoisseur of fine writing utensils and ink, but I have not seen any fountain ink quite like this. Luxury Red, Quink? Please do share.

Dr. Bates: Hmmm, indeed. This is a DNA-pigmented sanguineous ink that operates on the principle of capillary, carbon movement. The ink is about, say, 38 years of age—exactly your age—and is a fine example of permanence. Both the pen and the ink have a unique feel...but this conversation is for another day. Let’s not keep the faculty waiting.

The Adventist University: [Collectively, the six interviewees and Dr. Bates patiently await Prof. Andrew’s signature.]

Prof. Andrew: [Prof. Andrew’s pen and the contract disagree like opposite poles of a magnet. The professor reluctantly signs—the best non-option, the only option—and the grinding cycle begins again.] That about does it.

The Adventist University: [a large roar culminates] Welcome, and God Bless Ellen! To our new convert!

Le Jeux and *Règles* and the Not-So-Beautiful Game

Admittedly, *The Interview* is my nerdy, literary attempt to stone my contemporaries with Adventist bibles without facing Ellen's eternal wrath. Beneath the satirical veneer commences a subversive game of power, its ideological composition, what it reveals/conceals, and how it disindividualizes, which is the tacit logic of *les jeux*. Disindividualization is the process in which the individual is magically raptured from ordinary life and thrown into a collective phantasia, what anthropologists call *phratría*, in which solidarity, openness, and benevolence are disguised as *other means*. Our concern is therefore one that investigates *other means*, ideological inscriptions "so obvious that one does not see them" (de Certeau 22). Decoding or re-encoding this Wittgenstein-like riddle, there is hidden publicly some-else-where a limited edition user's manual that is from the Bronze Age and is readily available. Whether you're playing Lick the Dean's Ass, Chase the Superior, The Non-Participatory Faculty Game, Provost Says, or some other humiliating gray-collar working game, systemic *règles* (rules), both visible and invisible, are governing codes that render possible or impossible operational movements (enunciative practices) on the given field. Game theorist Jesper Juul (2005), in his text *Half-Real*, ascribes some of the following qualities to gaming:

- (1) Games are rule based; that is, the activity has structure, which makes it possible to repeat it.
- (2) Games are variable and have a quantifiable outcome: The various outcomes can be precisely enumerated and each of the outcomes is assigned a value.
- (3) Players are attached and have a vested interest in the outcome.
- (4) Games have negotiable consequences (fictive or real-life) to an outcome. (36)

We therefore may conclude that games are an interplay of systemic activities played out in *espace* in which participants make decisions and exercise power to achieve a *unilateral* outcome. Significant here are the terms *espace* and *unilateral*. *Espace* signifies *le domaine*, or the iterating venues of play in which everyday practices are exercised. This is critical, and I will return to the topic.

To be clear, *règles* are never altogether defined. Depending upon the situation, they are both determinate and indeterminate. *Règles* are determinate in the sense that invisible hands write with invisible ink on invisible paper, so a piece is still a work in progress. The players, then, must possess a type of *savoir faire* that sheds light on such double-dealing. Navigating such institutional contradictions and immaterialities is similar to dodging projectiles from a barrage of Mayan atlatls—you're on borrowed time! Operating in bad faith becomes the only *modus operandi* for most. Strategies include (1) teaching 15-18 credits a semester without additional pay, (2) volunteering to take on additional administrative duties, (3) assisting

with facilities management, (4) visiting neighboring high schools to recruit, and (5) without promise of remuneration, paying out of pocket for pizza for the department—part of the indenture contract you sign to keep your job and stay in good favor. In return, the occasional limp, clammy, shifty-eye uncertain handshake from a superior prevents one from seeing how close the projectile really is.

What follows are inventoried and dated thoughts, diagrams, and analyses of the most salient games played at TAU. Ranging from beginner to advanced, all games carry weighted consequences. *It always begins with the job announcement!*

Jeux 1: *Job Announcement, aka Solicitation for a Prosti-letariat*

Level: Beginner

TAU: The Game Encoded

Lecturer, Assistant, Associate, Full Professor, depending upon qualifications, tenure-track

Beginning fall 2013. 5 courses/year (3-2/semester), undergraduate and graduate. Dissertation and thesis supervision. Usual committee work. Ph.D. in area of specialization prior to appointment. Competence in appropriate ancient and modern languages.

TAU was founded in the name of The Adventist Church as a national university and center of research and scholarship; its School of Philosophy, which is canonically established as an Ellen White Faculty, seeks candidates who understand and will make a significant contribution to the university's distinctive mission and goals.

La Perruque: The Game Decoded

Purpose: To fish for *Call Girls for High-End Escorts*, those willing to prostitute themselves into serfdom without promise of emancipation.

Research agenda: Publish or perish, team player/martyrdom, community or university service/free labor. Salary.

Intellectual value cannot and should not be quantified. Consider yourself part of an emerging elite, gray-collar, working-poor class. Minorities, including women, are welcome to apply as the university benefits from tax credits. All applicants must provide certification of their **New Religious/Academic Movement Vaccinations (NR/AMV)**, 3 letters of conversion, transcript(s) of perpetual training and brainwashing, M.A./Ph.D. (preferred), and oaths of poverty, silence, and obedience.

Equipment: Cover letter, extreme debt, rose-tinted glasses, bipolar disorder

Interlude

Solicitation for a Prosti-letariat: Showing My Ass(ets)

You know those seedy gringo games played in South America where a beautiful woman at a discotheque pretends that she's interested in you, kisses you on the neck or gently brushes her lips against your ear, then walks away? Unwittingly, you are a marked man. You're a target. My cover letter was the seedy adulterous kiss. For about a year, I've moled around the church, taught workshops, helped out with extra-curriculars. I even castrated myself by publicly repenting. Hell, the university even included me in their Bible retreats. While there, I gained intimate knowledge of disciplinary environments of enclosure and control existing between the church and university. And if I was to save myself from the drudges of unemployment, my cover letter had to reveal that I was a convert, not a dissonant—a missionary, not an intellectual. I had to show that I wanted to win souls for Ellen. My cover letter was the perfect rouge, a linguistic portrait of who they were, and by extension who I pretended to be. Cover letters and other documents of verification essentially express the same thing—I need a job, no two ways about it! Much like Internet porn, it's a game of aesthetics and speculation. You gaze, intellectually masturbate, and cum to a decision. Pygmalion's virtue of adoration and Narcissus's vice of self-indulgence served me quite well and are the reasons that I achieved competency in this game and am currently employed.

Game Played

Cover letter: Solicitation for a Prosti-letariat

"Three, oh, it's a magic number. Yeah, it is—the magic number." Lithium's atomic number, the holy trinity, and the anecdotal "third time is a charm," etc., all signify the importance of the three, so my cover letter was divided into three parts: castration, ideological brainwashing, and submission.

The opening paragraph demonstrated humiliation. I once more castrated myself, if that's even possible, by talking about my religious conversion, likening it to Paul's journey to Damascus. I also talked about how my life is now dedicated to "winning souls for Ellen." Admittedly, this is not a phrase the institution uses, but it's catchy and cultish, and Adventism has that feel. Moreover, Ellen White's text on education was particularly helpful in defining my role as a vessel used by God to nurture and spread His word. It really drove home the true purpose of Adventist education, the assumed sincerity of my conversion, and that I understood the purpose of the church and the university as one in the same—as Jesus (God, the son) is one and the same in the trinity. Ergo, if I were hired, my whole being, no matter how free spirited, had to possess the gravity and singularity of an Adventist black hole.

The second paragraph addressed the nexus between the church (*habitus*) and the university (field). To be quite honest, I just paraphrased a bullet point from the pastor's sermon: Mental, physical, social, and spiritual health, intellectual growth, and service to humanity form a core of values that are essential aspects of the Adventist education philosophy. Spiritual metaphors, scientific metaphors, and alchemic metaphors are often used when talking about religious and intellectual transformation, so I had to tightrope over the 666 bridge of intellectual freedom and religious enlightenment. The distinction between the church and the university is not altogether clear—even Adventists find it challenging. From what I have observed, this is intentional and allows for *puppeteering bureaucrats* to pass the buck whilst finding protection behind the invisible hand.

My final paragraph emphasized the purity of my *bodily habitus* as a hollow, completely cleansed vessel, ready to be whored and soiled by the best taker. Low self-esteem, submissiveness, and docility—all priority qualities of prostitutes. Remember, we are all prostitutes, or in this case prosti-letariats. Be it the call girl for the jet-setting escort, we all have a price. The cover letter communicates your price and what favors you are willing to do. Religious institutions are nothing but whorehouses with crosses on them; they charge by the hour, so I knew what I was getting into!

Note to Reader

Reflections: Solicitation for a Prosti-letariat

Reconnaissance at various levels is strongly recommended. Depending on the size of the institution and the department, you can penetrate only so far. TAU is an anomaly because the church is both a material and immaterial extension of the university. By forfeiting many Saturday nights, I learned a great deal about its organizational structure and took note of (1) its governing behavioral practices, i.e., interior/exterior dispositions, (2) the ideological nexus between the university and the church, and (3) bodily habitus, i.e., the body as a vessel consubstantiated and/or, in some cases, transubstantiated with an unknown quality 'X.' Intel served as a cheat sheet to get my foot in the door. I got the interview.

Jeux 2: Jeux bac à sable

Level: Beginner to advanced

TAU: The Game Encoded

The general purposes of the interview for the interviewer is to gather pertinent information about the candidate(s) in question, to fact-check one's qualifications and job-related skill sets: communication, organizational, leadership, motivation, work ethic, competency, and emotional and behavioral intelligence.

La Perruque: The Game Decoded

You apply for a position because you have no sandbox in which to play, are about to be kicked out of the sandbox, or you need more sand. Everyone knows this. Every interview is an evolving manifestation of strategies and tactics learned in the nursery school sandbox: deception, negotiation, and mechanics of power. Metaphorically, the sandbox represents the *habitus*—the building blocks of one's culture—a deep cognitive template that allows for members of the community to function systematically; therefore, success in the sandbox depends on one's *savoir faire*—*habitus* in relation to the field(s). *Fields* are micro-*habiti* that have their own procedural codes but are not altogether autonomous from their *habitus*, thus concealing and protecting their true operational logic; moreover, unlike *habitus*, *fields* are liquid-like, possessing all the transformative qualities of matter, which makes them very difficult to detect. Thus, the game is played on two levels: beginner and intermediate. The interview is an empirical test of whether you can follow rules and how likely you are to go AWOL. Behavioral and emotional intelligence are assessed in relation to rational practices within the *habitus* at the beginner level. At the intermediate to advanced level, the *habitus* is no longer static. Its violent energy is released, setting off high-velocity chain reactions. Fields are birthed; they collide, cancel each other out, and bleed into one another. Likewise, the game *Sandbox* is not static. It is an incessant eruption of signifying homonyms (i.e., sandbox = potlucks = departmentals = faculty retreats = faculty evaluations = spirit day). For all intent and purpose, the game, no matter the level, boils down to how much sh*t you are willing to shovel, if you'll sh*t on others, and how likely you are to cry Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) once the sh*t hits the fan. That's a lot of sh*t.

Equipment: Shovel, smile implants, black suit, linguistic roulette, knowledge of *la perruque*, shifting fields

Interlude

Jeux Bac à Sable

From the moment the phone hits the receiver until the doorbell rings, you get the chills. Is she a non-smoker, is "she" a "he," bait and switch, D&D free, or worse—law enforcement. You just don't know! Interviews, like soliciting for prostitution, are a game of roulette—black, you're lucky; red, you get burned. The outcome is fatally certain, but you don't care. I got red; after being escorted to the back room, I got a bad feeling that I was gonna get f*cked. One by one, the virgin bible bangers entered the room and formed a circle around the table. I was at the head. Even after going to Jesus Camp and participating in a whole bunch of extra-curriculars, when Dr. Bates asked me to commence the interview with prayer, for 30 seconds or so I was a fish out of water. Irregular heart palpitations, arrhythmic breathing—the last

time I prayed was for the winning pick-6 lotto. Like all sinners, I defaulted to “*Our Father, who art in Heaven....*” No sooner had the “n” in Heaven left my mouth, Dr. Bates interrupted me with dagger eyes, ready to chase me, like Jesus chased the money changers out of the temple. Avoiding eye contact was a way for me to not acknowledge his and possibly others’ contempt for my sacrilegious prayer. Instead, I murmured through until the last word, “*Amen.*”

Other than inviting them to happy hour at a Brazilian steak house, there was no greater offense. However, not everyone was ready to publicly flog me; they were too busy getting off at my expense. Others had a sense of humor or at least could mask their disapproval. Maybe they were mollified by my limited edition, vintage, lambskin Bible with Ellen’s signature engraved; the lingering aroma of my spiced ginger tea; or my acacia wood crucifix. Unbeknownst to them, each artifact selected was a calculated tactic on my end that constructed a terministic screen (a *selective* network comprising cultural terms, practices, and symbols) used to persuade them and bolster my ethos. Who knows. They got off. I got the job. Happy ending!

Game Played

Jeux Bac à Sable

At 8:00 a.m. in the morning, on 42nd Street in New York, you can find *Les Trois Perdants* or a three-card monte game. From left to right, right to left, the field (card) floats. Don’t lose sight! For *la perruque*, winning is an interminable process that begins with a few precarious victories followed by a dammit, shrug, hands in the pocket, and walk of shame to elsewhere. Losing is inevitable, but the manner of losing isn’t. The challenge is semantically decoding the language game played, for it is a matter of ideological homonyms, the difference between the image and the shadow or the habitus and field. They are the same, yet different; thus, *la perruque* has to keep his eye on the dealer’s use of strategic space (anticipating probable and certain movements) and trapdoors, while calculating his next movements. *La perruque* is the worker’s work disguised as work for his employer. De Certeau explained: “[I]t may be as simple a matter as a secretary’s writing a love letter on ‘company time’ or as complex as a cabinetmaker’s ‘borrowing’ a lathe to make a piece of furniture for his living room” (25).

The syndicated comic strip *Dilbert* is an anecdotal narrative of the modern-day *perruque*—an undervalued, overworked, under-paid non-smoker who smokes because it ensures a 10-12 minute work break. This worker is occasionally AWOL and takes nooner masturbation breaks, extended lunch breaks, and the more-than-occasional promenade to the printer. Depending on where this person parks, the I-left-something-in-my-car excuse can shave between 60-90 minutes off their work day. ²

La perruque is the tactical response to the ongoing gray-collar chicanery present in everyday places of business. It's a way of "dicking around" without dicking anyone over. Already built into the perimeter of the sandbox, or taken into account by the architectonic structure, is dicking around, so any tactical maneuver or psychological victory by *la perruque* is really *faux* and just a feel-good moment. In ***Solicitation for a Prosti-leteriat: Showing My Ass(ets)***, I have gone to considerable detail recounting how the game of negotiating in the sandbox is played, the importance of tactics (artifacts) as a means to manipulate and persuade. What follows are tactics that I've charted over the course of a year at TAU whose sole strategic purpose was to manufacture a climate of fear and anxiety by means of surveillance or the representation of surveillance that eliminates idleness and encourages motionless movements in which institutional surveillance

Contributor Biographies

THREAD EDITORS

JAMIE "SKYE" BIANCO (<http://www.spikenlilli.com>) (ECOLOGIES) is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Media, Culture and Communication at New York University. She is a queer, feminist and site-based digital media theorist, performer and practitioner whose multimodal work investigates ecologies of trash, toxicity, disaster, bodies and the extra-human agencies and affections produced by them. She composes and remixes still images, sound, video, animation, theory and lyrical prose in multimodal performative, web-based, computational/algorithmic and installation formats. Selected multimodal work appears in *O-zone*, *The Petroleum Manga* (Punctum, 2014) *Debates in Digital Humanities* (Minnesota, 2012), *The Affective Turn* (Duke, 2007), *FibreCulture*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, and *Rhizome*, and she was selected as a local artist for the 2013 Carnegie International exhibition/catalogue. She is also Design Editor and Lead Designer for CSA's *Lateral* and the co-organizer with Melissa Rogers of CSA's inaugural makerSpace at the 2014 conference. She received a Ph.D. in women's studies and English from the City University of New York.

BRUCE BURGETT (UNIVERSITIES IN QUESTION) is Dean and Professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington Bothell. He is the President of the Cultural Studies Association, the Chair of the National Advisory Board of Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, and the co-director of the UW's graduate Certificate in Public Scholarship. He is the author of *Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender, and Citizenship in the Early Republic*, and co-editor of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. He recently completed a second edition of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* and is currently working on a book project entitled *Sex, Panic, Nation*. He has taught, researched, and published widely in the fields of American studies, cultural studies, and queer studies. He serves on the editorial and advisory boards of *American Quarterly* and *American Literary History*, and the press committee of the University of Washington Press. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of Humanities Washington.

PATRICIA TICINETO CLOUGH (THEORY) is professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the Graduate Center and Queens College of the City University of New York. She is author of *Autoaffection: Unconscious Thought in the Age of Teletechnology* (2000); *Feminist Thought:*

Desire, Power and Academic Discourse (1994) and *The End(s) of Ethnography: From Realism to Social Criticism* (1998). She is editor of *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, (2007) and with Craig Willse, editor of *Beyond Biopolitics: Essays on the Governance of Life and Death* (2011). She is currently working on *Ecstatic Corona: Philosophy and Family Violence*, an ethnographic historically researched experimental writing project about where she grew up in Queens New York.

RANDY MARTIN (UNIVERSITIES IN QUESTION) directs the arts politics program at New York University, He is author most recently of *Under New Management: Universities, Administrative Labor and the Professional Turn*, and the forthcoming *Knowledge LTD: A Social Logic of the Derivative*, both from Temple.

CHRISTINA NADLER (QUEER THE NOISE) is a doctoral candidate in the sociology program at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She has taught at Hunter College since 2008 and at Brooklyn College from 2008-2011. Some of the courses she has taught most recently include Classical Sociological Theory, Current Social Theory, and Sociology of Gender, but she has also taught courses on race, social networks, and family. For the 2011-12 school year she served as a Writing Fellow at Bronx Community College. She is currently working as the OpenCUNY Academic Digital Medium (<http://opencuny.org/coordinators/>) Coordinator for Organizing and Action. OpenCUNY provides Graduate Center students access to free and open source digital media. Christina's particular role is to extend integrate action-oriented media within the OpenCUNY medium and foster connections with organizations who share OpenCUNY's mission. She serves on numerous committees, including a position on the Graduate Center's Doctoral Students' Council from 2009-2014, and as a member of the Executive Committee from 2011-2013. Christina serves on the Cultural Studies Association's Executive Committee and the 2014 Conference Planning Committee. Her areas of interest include cultural studies, science and technology, psychoanalytic theory, post-structuralism, race, gender, animal studies, queer theory, new materialism and ontology. Her dissertation explores how the ontological turn presents challenges to sociology's reliance on social constructionism as its primary paradigm.

MEGAN TURNER (QUEER THE NOISE) is a doctoral candidate in Literature at the University of California, San Diego, where she is writing her dissertation, entitled *Sex on Fire: Queering Anarchist Futures in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century US Culture*. Exploring the textual strategies used by anarchist groups to mobilize readers and create political communities, Megan approaches counter-hegemonic representation as a practice of literary hacking a means of learning to read and strategically redeploy semiotic, discursive and genre-based codes to create textual spaces that meet the needs of marginalized communities. In particular, her work highlights the imbrication of queer and anarchist politics by engaging with desire and pleasure as central nodes through which state power is both administered and contested. A former HASTAC Scholar and California Humanities Fellow, Megan has served on the CSA Executive Committee and is a current member of the Lateral Design Collective.

DESIGN / DEVELOPMENT

JAMIE "SKYE" BIANCO (DESIGN EDITOR/LEAD DESIGNER)

ZAC DAVIDM (LEAD DEVELOPER) is a digital problem solver and the founder of Forgood Studios (<http://forgoodstudios.org>) and Redjacket Arts (<http://redjacketarts.com>). His contributions, and the help of a few friends, are made to Lateral through Redjacket Arts, a web and digital services company tailored to non-profits and communities. Forgood Studios is the parent organization of Redjacket Arts and its goal is to systematically approach and solve problems through the power of networked non-profits, working together to create a greater whole.

THREAD CONTRIBUTORS

SHANA AGID (THEORY) is an artist, teacher, writer, and activist whose work focuses on relationships of power and difference, particularly regarding sexuality, race, and gender in visual and political cultures. Agid is an Assistant Professor of Arts, Media, and Communication at Parsons the New School for Design where he teaches book arts, collaborative design, and service design. She has an MFA in Printmaking and Book Arts and an MA in Visual and Critical Studies from California College of the Arts. He is on the Editorial Board of *Radical Teacher*. Her artist books are in collections at the Walker Art Center, The New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, and DePaul University, among others. Agid's writing on design and politics has been published in *Design and Culture* and *Design Philosophy Papers*, and she is currently doing design-led research on the role of communication, ideology, and notions of "future" in design and politics.

KATHERINE BEHAR (ECOLOGIES) is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist whose work includes performance, interactive installation, video, and writing about digital culture. Behar's work appears at festivals, galleries, performance spaces, and art centers worldwide, including the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Judson Church in New York; UNOACTU in Dresden; The Girls Club Collection in Miami; Feldman Gallery + Project Space in Portland; DeBalie Centre for Culture and Politics in Amsterdam; the Mediations Biennale in Poznan; the Chicago Cultural Center; the Swiss Institute in Rome; the National Museum of Art in Cluj-Napoca; and many others. She is the recipient of fellowships from The MacDowell Colony, *Art Journal* and the Rubin Museum of Art; and grants including the Franklin Furnace Fund, the U.S. Consulate in Leipzig, the Illinois Arts Council, and the Cleveland Performance Art Festival. Her ongoing projects include two collaborations, the performance art group Disorientationism, with Marianne M. Kim, and the art and technology team Resynplement, with Ben Chang and Silvia Ruzanka. Behar's writings on technology and culture have been published in *Lateral*, *Media-N*, *Parsons Journal for Information Mapping*, *Visual Communication Quarterly*, *EXTENSIONS: The Online Journal for Embodied Technology*. She is Assistant Professor of New Media Arts at Baruch College.

HILARY BERWICK (QUEER THE NOISE) is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at UC Davis. Her work focuses on gender and masculinity, affect and histories of emotion, racialization and ethnicity, and theories of mourning. Her dissertation, "Producing Anarchist Subjects: Emotion, Race, and Gender in the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti, 1917-1927," investigates the emergence of "anarchist" as a new racialized and gendered subject that arose along with bombing violence in the late 1910s and 1920s. This project locates Sacco and Vanzetti within the longer history by which national, legislative, and medical discourses have constructed men of color as violent, both because they are marked as emotionally unstable and because they are understood to produce fear in an imagined American population.

JAMIE "SKYE" BIANCO (ECOLOGIES/UNIVERSITIES IN QUESTION/EDITORIAL VIDEO (MASHUP)) is mentioned above under "Thread Editors."

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